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Mr N Meehan
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Meehan

Ofsted 2009-10 subject survey inspection programme: design and technology (D&T)

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and pupils, during my visit on 9 March 2010 to look at work in D&T.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the subject, the visit had a particular focus on how the school promotes awareness and relevance of D&T to pupils and their parents, and the extent to which their views contribute to the school's evaluation of D&T.

The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to our national evaluation and reporting. Published reports are likely to list the names of the contributing institutions but individual institutions will not be identified in the main text.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included interviews with staff, parents and pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of three lessons.

The overall effectiveness of D&T is good.

Achievement in D&T

Pupils' achievement in D&T is good.

- Pupils make good progress across the school in a wide range of D&T-related skills to attain above nationally expected levels by the end of Year 6. A good range of well-planned activities enables all pupils to produce products of quality, such as picture frames in Year 3 and powered vehicles in Year 6.
- The quality of pupils' learning is good overall. Pupils are industrious in lessons and they work well in pairs and small groups to explore ideas and

talk about their designs. Pupils learn how to use simple tools safely, such as saws, demonstrating good awareness of how to minimise risk and stay safe when using them to cut resistant materials such as wood.

Quality of teaching of D&T

The quality of teaching in D&T is good.

- Teaching and learning are good overall. Teachers demonstrate good levels of subject knowledge and use subject-specific vocabulary effectively during lessons. Lesson planning is detailed and teachers identify and share the key learning intentions with pupils clearly to provide a basis for good learning. However, sometimes teachers choose tasks that are not matched carefully to the learning intention or the resources available. This can hinder the opportunity for rapid progress.
- Procedures for assessment in D&T are satisfactory. Staff provide good support to pupils in lessons and provide appropriate levels of information about how well they are doing in D&T. Pupils' individual D&T folders provide a continuous record of their achievement. These are used appropriately to inform end-of-year reports.

Quality of the curriculum in D&T

The quality of the curriculum in D&T is good.

- A balanced and varied curriculum provides many good opportunities for the continuous development of D&T skills. Well-planned units of work ensure good links are established with other curriculum areas, such as science and art. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to use information and communication technology in D&T, such as for creating simple graphic designs, using the internet for research about a product and controlling powered vehicles.
- Aspects of food technology are covered appropriately through themed 'Healthy Eating' weeks and modules of work for older pupils. However, resources are limited and, consequently, younger pupils have few opportunities to develop their skills in this aspect of D&T.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in D&T

Leadership and management in D&T are good.

- The subject is led well and continues to build on the firm foundations laid down by the previous coordinator for D&T. Well-constructed action plans convey a clear vision for further improvement. Well-chosen training for staff has had a clear impact in the quality of teaching for example, in pupils' confident and safe use of wood in D&T activities. Self-evaluation is accurate based on a pictorial overview of pupils' work and scrutiny of teachers' planning. The observation of teaching and learning in lessons is, however, at an early stage of development. This means that subject leadership is not in a strong enough position to tackle any inconsistencies in the quality of pupils' learning experiences and achievement in D&T.

The extent to which the school promotes awareness and relevance of D&T to pupils and parents

Awareness and relevance of D&T to pupils and parents are satisfactory.

- A clear vision for the development of D&T is appropriately shared with pupils and staff. Older pupils recognise how D&T can prepare them for their next stage of education and adult life. Discussions with some parents reveal that they are confident about the contribution that D&T makes to the overall curriculum through the sharing of termly plans with them.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- monitoring the quality of teaching and learning to ensure all pupils make consistently good progress in lessons.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop D&T in the school.

As I explained previously, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be published on the Ofsted website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Philip Mann
Her Majesty's Inspector