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Mr E Dunphy
Headteacher
St James the Great Roman Catholic Primary School
Peckham Road
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Dear Mr Dunphy

Ofsted 2010-11 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 6 May 2010 to look at work in 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 without your consent.

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

The overall effectiveness of D&T is satisfactory.

Achievement in D&T

Pupils' achievement in D&T is satisfactory.

- Children enter the school with skills that are below age-related expectations. They enjoy exploring materials and construction kits and develop confidence in using tools to make a range of products. Although progress is currently satisfactory, it is increasing quickly as the school rapidly develops creative elements further within the curriculum.
- Pupils eagerly engage in lessons. Clear guidance from teachers helps them to develop their design thinking well, along with a limited range of making skills.

Quality of teaching of D&T

The quality of teaching in D&T is good.

- Teachers have a clear understanding of what D&T is about and their approach nurtures and extends pupils' design and making capability.
- Teachers confidently work within the current schemes of work and the school has identified the need to support them to develop confidence and skill in a wider range of construction and manufacturing techniques.
- Learning is effective because teachers create a learning environment where creative thinking is embraced and all pupils are active learners. Teachers encourage pupils to explore designs and ask questions about why things are the way they are.

Quality of the curriculum in D&T

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

- Teachers make good use of the limited resources. The schemes of work are developing to ensure opportunities to challenge the more able pupils are planned effectively.
- The curriculum enables pupils to explore a range of materials, processes and design tasks, including experiences with systems and food. Pupils enjoyed their time making bread immensely. However, pupils, particularly able pupils, have few opportunities to develop a wide range of manufacturing techniques.
- The curriculum is developing with a greater focus on creativity. Opportunities for literacy and numeracy are integrated and rigorously planned. D&T is increasingly successful in ensuring a more holistic approach to learning.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in D&T

Leadership and management in D&T are good.

- Systems to monitor pupils' progress are developing. This is enabling the school's leaders to have a clear picture which informs planning and further developments. The school has already identified the need to provide wider opportunities for the more able students through the development of staff and the curriculum. Plans to develop the curriculum further to enhance creativity are in place and D&T has a part to play. To support this, further training has been identified. A programme to ensure teachers are even better placed to support D&T has been developed.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- increasing pupils' achievement by
 - developing the curriculum further to provide a wider range of manufacturing and extend the opportunities particularly for the more able students

- ensuring staff develop further confidence and skills in manufacturing to enable pupils to realise increasingly complex designs.

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 under the URN for your school. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Paul Scott
Her Majesty's Inspector