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Mrs J Buckle
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Buckle

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 18 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.

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

The overall effectiveness of D&T is good.

Achievement in D&T

Pupils' achievement in D&T is good.

- Pupils successfully learn how to design and model their ideas in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They know how some products work and develop their knowledge from home. With support, pupils can combine food ingredients to make healthy snacks. This provides a good base from which to develop their capability in designing and making. Pupils continue to progress in Key Stage 1 to develop research and planning skills. They recognise the properties of some materials and achieve in line with the expectations for their age.
- School monitoring identified older pupils were making slower progress in D&T. Actions to tackle this are proving effective: work is relevant and well constructed around solving problems, and pupils in Key Stage 2 make

good progress in lessons. Pupils demonstrate original and unusual design ideas, good reasoning and problem-solving skills in their current work.

- D&T makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development. Pupils are enthusiastic and enjoy D&T. This is firmly demonstrated in their very good behaviour and attitudes. Pupils have a secure knowledge of health and safety and they apply this very well in lessons.

Quality of teaching of D&T

The quality of teaching of D&T is good.

- Lessons are planned and organised well and pupils are very clear about what they have to do. Specialist support and teaching resources are deployed effectively to enable pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to make good progress in lessons. A key feature of lessons is the good quality questioning by teachers and support staff which promotes pupils' thinking and understanding. Expert questioning was very well modelled in the Reception class, enabling pupils to think like designers.
- In some classes, teachers share criteria so that pupils understand precisely what is expected of them and the products they make. Opportunities to work with progressively complex criteria, to challenge pupils further, could usefully be extended to all classes.
- Assessment for learning is developing. Class teachers record small steps in pupils' progress on their weekly plans. This practice is well established in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1, but the quality and depth of analysis in recording pupils' progress is less developed at Key Stage 2.

Quality of the curriculum in D&T

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

- The D&T curriculum meets pupils' needs and provides sufficient breadth to their work. Support and regular checks are developing teachers' confidence and knowledge of the technically demanding aspects of electronics, control and mechanisms in upper Key Stage 2. Work in the Early Years Foundation Stage is well constructed to enable pupils to explore different materials: cutting, joining and designing and making imaginatively.
- Links with other subjects are generally planned well. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 made good progress to make their photograph frames fit accurately as a result of well-planned numeracy work to develop their skills in measuring and marking out. Some projects need refining as they do not give sufficient attention to meeting users' needs: the key reason for designing and making products.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in D&T

Leadership and management in D&T are good.

- D&T is very well led. In the very short time that the subject leader has been in post, much progress has been made in coordinating and developing D&T. The school uses sources of information, advice and guidance effectively to support the development of the subject. Self-evaluation is good. You share, with the subject leader and link governor, a common understanding of the strengths and of the actions that have been taken to tackle the weaknesses. Where support has been given, it is proving effective in benefiting pupils' learning and progress. Monitoring and evaluation are securely established and firmly focused on teaching and learning and raising attainment, particularly in Key Stage 2.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring consistency in assessing pupils' learning and progress in Key Stage 2 by sharing the good practice emerging in other Key Stages
- developing and sharing with pupils the use of criteria to ensure all know precisely what qualities and skills they need to demonstrate to be successful
- giving more prominence in the curriculum to designing and making in response to users' needs.

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

Gina White
Her Majesty's Inspector