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Mrs S Sumpner
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Sumpner

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 7 June 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 their 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 four lessons.

The overall effectiveness of D&T is good.

Achievement in D&T

Pupils' achievement in D&T is good.

- From low starting points, particularly in communication, pupils reach expected standards by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress.
- Pupils are developing technical vocabulary and the practical skills needed to realise their ideas. Older pupils are developing drawing and measuring skills well to create good quality technical drawings. They are developing an awareness of enterprise and manufacturing and are learning how computers aid designing and making.
- Pupils enjoy D&T and this is exemplified very well in lessons. They are eager to design and make products with a purpose and enjoy challenges. Some pupils demonstrate persistence in solving the problems they

encounter. They demonstrate safe use of equipment and follow health and safety rules. Behaviour is good, and in some lessons it is excellent.

Quality of teaching of D&T

The quality of teaching in D&T is good.

- Teachers' and teaching assistants' questioning is probing and challenging. It is used to good effect to encourage all pupils to explain their answers and to think about the next steps they need to take. Teachers' expert use of resources enhances learning. Extensive and well-planned use of everyday products supports pupils in developing research and investigation skills in many projects. For example, this type of investigation was used effectively in Years 3 and 4 to support pupils' designs of photograph frames.
- Pupils are taught to use information and communication technology effectively to support their D&T work. Pupils' use of digital cameras is well established from Reception to Year 6 and helps to build a consistent visual record of their work.
- Booklets, devised by the school to support each project, are popular with pupils. Those pupils interviewed found them useful and are clear about what is expected from them in lessons. Pupils from Year 1 onwards are supported very well to enable them to self-assess their work. Assessments in the Reception class are appropriately focused on what children can do and their use of technical vocabulary, decision-making skills and acquisition of practical skills.

Quality of the curriculum in D&T

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

- The D&T curriculum is planned well to meet pupils' needs and meets national requirements. The school recognises that opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of electrical circuits and switches and to use control programmes are limited. Plans are in place to tackle this. Well-constructed themes and effective use of resources enable pupils in the Reception class to undertake purposeful construction tasks.
- Extensive use of visitors and partnership links with the nearby sixth-form college and a local company enrich the D&T curriculum. They contribute effectively to pupils' development and awareness of local manufacturing industry, and the world of work. As a result, pupils see D&T as relevant to life skills and jobs. One Year 6 pupil said 'D&T is useful because you might be an engineer or mechanic when you are older'.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in D&T

Leadership and management in D&T are good.

- Your aims of preparing pupils to contribute to society are well demonstrated in the partnership links that are beginning to enrich the D&T

curriculum and develop pupils' awareness of the world of work and industry. The work of the assistant headteacher in pioneering video conference links with local industry contributes effectively to realising these aims.

- The subject is expertly led and specialist D&T training has been used effectively to move the subject forward in a relatively short time. Health and safety procedures are satisfactorily secured. Effective use of monitoring and evaluation strategies informs self-evaluation and the next steps for the development in D&T are clear. Actions are already having an impact in securing teachers' confidence through the development of curriculum planning and training to support accuracy in assessing pupils' attainment.
- The school is aware of the need to develop more explicit links between projects to promote progression more comprehensively. There is further work to do to systematically monitor pupils' progress from their starting points and to ensure their progress is accurately recorded and transferred between class teachers as pupils move through the school.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring pupils' progress from their starting points is securely monitored, progress records are accurate and systematically transferred between class teachers.

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