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21 June 2010

Mr A Travis
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Travis

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 9 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, a governor and pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of three lessons.

The overall effectiveness of D&T is satisfactory.

Achievement in D&T

Pupils' achievement in D&T is satisfactory.

- Pupils' in the Reception class make good progress in developing basic skills to join materials. Most pupils work independently and imaginatively to create products that interest them.
- Pupils in all year groups develop skills in designing, making and testing. The school's recent introduction of skills checklists demonstrates this clearly. Pupils in Key Stage 1 continue to refine making skills but are less clear about who they are designing products for and, as a result, this slows their progress and attainment.
- By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils reach the standards expected for their age. This is the result of very strong teaching in the latter years and a firm emphasis on purposeful designing and making that develops their

problem-solving skills. Their knowledge of mechanisms and making circuits is strong but their knowledge of control and programming is underdeveloped.

- D&T contributes very well to pupils' personal development. They particularly enjoy the challenge of acquiring and mastering practical skills. They follow health, safety and hygiene rules and they mostly make good progress in lessons.

Quality of teaching of D&T

The quality of teaching in D&T is good.

- Teachers make very good use of resources to support their teaching. For example, they use collections of products, such as toys and musical instruments, to support pupils' investigation and research. Excellent focused teaching about mechanisms enabled pupils in Year 5 to quickly identify why and how products worked. However, this high level of challenge is not consistent for all pupils in all lessons.
- Lessons engage and sustain pupils' interest. This is particularly clear in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Year 5, where focused use of teaching assistants is targeted well to support pupils in overcoming difficulties in their learning. In these lessons, pupils are clear about what is expected of them, their attitudes to learning are good and they work with a high level of independence. However, assessment to support learning in D&T is underdeveloped and pupils are not clear about how well they are achieving or how to improve.

Quality of the curriculum in D&T

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

- The curriculum meets requirements. It is enriched by visitors and participation in local science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) activities. This makes a very good contribution to developing pupils' problem-solving and team-working skills. Pupils enjoy the well-planned opportunities to develop their awareness of food and diet.
- The school is tackling the lack of resources and training that currently inhibits pupils' understanding of control and programming. The curriculum review has begun but has yet to identify where opportunities can be strengthened to progressively challenge pupils and promote their independence and achievement of higher standards.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in D&T

Leadership and management in D&T are good.

- Much has been achieved in the short time since the coordinator has taken up the post. This is the result of the investment that you and the governors have made in resources and the professional development of staff. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and draws upon a broad

range of monitoring and evaluation. Action to develop assessment has yet to be implemented sufficiently for leaders to gain a clear overview of pupils' attainment and progress.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- implementing the assessment system to a clear overview of pupils' attainment and progress
- ensuring lessons are planned to challenge all pupils
- reviewing the curriculum to identify where opportunities can be strengthened to promote pupils' independence, faster progress and higher standards.

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