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Mrs S Tyrrell
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Tyrrell

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 17 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 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 in lessons and almost all reach the standards expected for their age by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils start at the school with skills that are below expectations for their age, particularly in communication, and many are at early stages of learning English. D&T makes a good contribution to developing pupils' literacy skills. They make progress in explaining their designs and how they made their products as they move through school. While pupils make good progress in developing a technical vocabulary, it remains a weaker aspect of their performance.
- Pupils develop their basic understanding of mechanisms, including pneumatic control, through focused experiments and opportunities to make moving monsters. They are developing original ideas for products.

For example, some Year 5 pupils made bread people and plaited bread in unusual shapes. By Year 6, they can express their ideas in more detailed sketches, plans and measurements. However, pupils' technical skills are less developed and while they are able to construct products that work, greater attention and support are required to enable them to cut and join materials accurately.

- D&T makes a good contribution to pupils' enjoyment of school. They know how to act safely and follow basic health, safety and hygiene rules. Pupils see D&T as relevant to future jobs and to skills such as cooking, and they work collaboratively in lessons.

Quality of teaching of D&T

The quality of teaching in D&T is good.

- Lessons are mostly well structured and supported by good use of resources to make learning interesting and relevant. For example, a video of animated sequences and hands-on experiments enabled Year 3 pupils to see the effect of air in their pneumatics lesson. Teachers and teaching assistants ask challenging questions. Pupils who are in the early stages of learning English and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress in lessons as a result of well-tailored resources, tasks and support.
- Pupils' use of booklets to record their research, ideas, plans, testing of products and evaluations, provides a secure structure to their learning. Pupils find them helpful to recap their progress as they move through a two-week project. Occasionally, some work focuses too much on selecting materials to decorate rather than making choices about the construction of the product.
- Most pupils are clear about what is expected of them in lessons and understand the marking and assessment systems that are consistently implemented in D&T.

Quality of the curriculum in D&T

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

- The D&T curriculum meets requirements and provides very good opportunities for pupils to apply and develop literacy and numeracy skills. It is enriched well by experiences which involve some pupils in designing their own playground and making costumes with their parents for World Book Day. Year 6 pupils have good opportunities to design and make for younger pupils, and have made moving toys for their reading buddies. However, for other year groups, opportunities to focus on meeting users' needs in the products they design and make are less well developed.
- Pupils have an opportunity to experience programming and control but this diminishes in the upper years of Key Stage 2. As a result of the regular evaluations and feedback from teachers and pupils, school leaders are aware of a lack of resources, such as tools and other equipment, to

support pupils in developing their technical skills. They are taking steps to tackle this.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in D&T

Leadership and management in D&T are good.

- The production of pupils' booklets and actions to develop teaching resources have helped to make expectations clear to staff and brought consistency to teaching and pupils' learning in D&T. Effective monitoring and evaluation practices inform accurate self-evaluation. Leaders know the strengths and weaknesses in provision and have already started to tackle resource issues and introduced more time for D&T in the curriculum.
- The school gives adequate consideration to health and safety in teachers' planning. The coordinator is making use of staff skills to support pupils' making in D&T. However, further training is required to enable teachers to confidently support and guide pupils in developing more challenging and accurate making skills.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring older Key Stage 2 pupils have opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills in using control technology, and a stronger focus on users' needs is built into all projects
- developing pupils' technical skills and ensuring teachers have the training they need to help them to support pupils effectively in accurately making their design ideas.

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