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Mr S Holmes
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Holmes

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 28 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.

- Pupils get off to a flying start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The wealth of experiences to construct and to use materials and equipment provides a good base from which to develop designing and making skills. Throughout the school, pupils' knowledge and understanding of mechanisms, fastenings and the properties of materials are good. However, their development and use of technical vocabulary are weaker aspects of their performance. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils meet the expectations for their age and a significant group demonstrates further progress, particularly in analysing products.
- Pupils enjoy D&T, and their behaviour and attitudes to learning are first rate. They have a good knowledge of hygiene and health and safety when using tools and equipment. Older pupils are developing an awareness of

risk. Pupils work together well during lessons. In upper Key Stage 2, they demonstrate innovative ideas and produce work of high quality for example, when making and presenting Greek food.

Quality of teaching of D&T

The quality of teaching of D&T is good.

- Planning, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage, is good and learning builds firmly on pupils' earlier investigations. For example, the Reception class first explored tents and then worked enthusiastically to solve the problem of how to make their own. In all lessons, a secure emphasis on pupils finding out for themselves accompanied by good, focused questioning by staff promotes challenge. The answers pupils gave in response clearly showed the depth of their thinking and reasoning. However, more able pupils could be challenged even further to promote their achievement at the highest levels.
- Teachers make good use of resources and a range of teaching styles to engage pupils in learning. This was demonstrated exceptionally well during a focused practical task in which pupils were introduced to levers and linkages, watched video footage, discussed with their partners how they might solve the problem and experimented with well-prepared packs of materials to join linkages and levers together to make Ron the Roman pop up from a behind a wall.
- Pupils are clear about what is expected of them in lessons and how their work will be assessed because of the consistent use of criteria to identify what their products must do. Older pupils are very aware that more and more is expected of them in D&T as they move through the school.

Quality of the curriculum in D&T

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

- The curriculum is varied and relevant to pupils' interests and curiosity about products and how they work. Teachers' knowledge of assessment is used well to support them in planning a wealth of opportunities. Pupils enjoy the curriculum and the wide range of enrichment provided by visitors, trips and regular work with a secondary school.
- Opportunities for pupils to learn about food technology and to progressively adapt and create their own original recipes are planned well. The school is reviewing the curriculum and opportunities for pupils to make circuits are developing. However, too few opportunities are provided for pupils to understand how control technology is used and this aspect requires updating and improving.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in D&T

Leadership and management in D&T are good.

- Your enthusiasm and understanding of D&T is first rate. The impact of the work undertaken to develop partnerships contributes effectively to the curriculum. Monitoring and evaluation procedures are secure and have led to improvements in resources for D&T. Developments in assessment mean that leaders are able to gain an overview of standards. A strong start has been made in monitoring pupils' progress and plans to develop and review this are well conceived. However, the progress of more able pupils requires further attention to ensure they make more consistent progress.
- Health and safety are given due attention in curriculum planning and in lessons and pupils fully understand and apply them. As D&T coordinator, your work in supporting staff is highly regarded and has contributed to their increasing confidence in teaching D&T. Opportunities to capitalise on pupils' excitement in creating products that light up and move requires further development to take advantage of the increasing technological developments in the control and programming aspects of D&T.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- using existing systems to monitor pupils' progress effectively and develop even greater challenge in lessons to promote the progress of the most able pupils
- developing the teaching of control technology and teachers' awareness of the latest developments through further training.

I hope that 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