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Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Carter

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 3 February 2011 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 start school with a range of different experiences in making. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage develop good basic skills. They work together and become increasingly confident, independent learners. These skills are further developed as pupils move through the school. Pupils enjoy making products and make good progress in D&T. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to other pupils. This is because mixed ability groupings encourage pupils to help each other. Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals make similar progress to other groups.
- Pupils are provided with opportunities that enable them to demonstrate initiative in their learning and make products that interest them. For example, Year 1 pupils investigated how playground equipment is

designed and made and used this information to help them design and make a new play area.

Quality of teaching of D&T

The quality of teaching of D&T is good.

- The majority of teaching is good with some that is outstanding. Teachers know their pupils well and relationships are strong. The majority of teaching encourages independent work. Teachers' subject knowledge is used well to enthuse and challenge the pupils. They are well motivated and interested in D&T. For example, pupils in Year 5 understand and use new technology to enhance their understanding of D&T and make rapid progress. They produced work of a very high standard and confidently explained the technical problems they had overcome to design and make a space story, 'to infinity and beyond' with backdrop, characters, scenes and camera work.
- Pupils work well with partners in class and behaviour around the school is good. They move maturely from activity to activity. They are encouraged to talk about their learning and teachers have begun to use questioning more effectively to probe pupils' understanding and address their misconceptions. The school is aware that assessment procedures vary from class to class and appropriate plans are in place to share good practice.

Quality of the curriculum in D&T

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

- D&T contributes to cross-curricular themes well but progression is not mapped adequately. Consequently, opportunities are missed to systematically build upon pupils' knowledge and understanding of D&T. At times, the mix of D&T activities is poor. In Year 2, for example, too many activities focus on two-dimensional work and opportunities to extend pupils' designing and making into three dimensions are insufficient.
- Enrichment activities reinforce learning and are proving popular with pupils. Some groups of pupils, such as those who are vulnerable or higher attaining pupils, enjoy activities such as the Imagineering club. This provides good opportunities for using equipment and tools and links well to work outside school. The introduction of 'golden time' on Friday afternoons helps to provide a rich variety of D&T experiences. Pupils value opportunities to choose their activity and this motivates them. Opportunities such as 'Let's Cook' in Year 2 enable pupils to make a wide choice of food products and are also encouraging families to cook.
- Partnership work with other schools is used well to give pupils specialist teaching in D&T in a wide range of areas including computer-aided design and further opportunities to explore the practical properties of different materials.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in D&T

Leadership and management in D&T are good.

- The subject coordinator is an enthusiastic advocate of the subject. She uses her knowledge and understanding of D&T to promote the subject within school. Her commitment is shared by senior leaders. A wider range of teaching and learning methods have been adopted and supported effectively. Monitoring is appropriately focused on encouraging greater pupil independence and choices in their learning. The school is aware of the need to develop teachers' subject knowledge and work with external partners is used strategically to improve capacity in the subject.
- Health and safety are secure and all risk assessments are in place. Pupils are increasingly encouraged to be actively involved in risk-assessing activities themselves. This fosters a greater sense of responsibility for their own and others' safety.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring that the curriculum is carefully mapped against National Curriculum level descriptors so that pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills are more systematically and rigorously developed and built upon.

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 published on the Ofsted website. It may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection. Except in the case of academies, a copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

Michelle Parker
Her Majesty's Inspector