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Mrs J Gadsby
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Gadsby

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 8 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

Achievement in D&T is good.

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with a range of different skills in making. The strong emphasis placed on them exploring and investigating the world around them through carefully structured activities encourages independent learning. As a result, they develop good basic skills in designing and making products. This is carefully fostered and built on as they go into Key Stage 1. All products the pupils make have a real purpose and this encourages them to appreciate and value D&T and to understand its importance in their own life and future economic well-being. For example, in Year 1, pupils imaginatively re-used the plastic bottles from lunchtimes to reduce landfill. Each pupil created a different new use for their bottles and made them into new products.

- All pupils make good progress in lessons. This is because of the range of strategies the school uses to support pupils with individual emotional and learning needs. For example, classroom buddies are used to help them with their learning and social development. This and other tailored interventions help pupils to engage well with their learning.
- Pupils' planning, computer presentations and evaluations show a high quality of finish and use a wide range of materials and contexts for making.
- Rigorous monitoring of pupils' work clearly identifies individual pupils' progress towards their targets which are based on National Curriculum levels. Opportunities are missed to ensure that extension activities always enable higher order thinking in D&T.

Quality of teaching of D&T

The quality of teaching of D&T is good.

- Group activities are well resourced and pupils concentrate well and help each other. Pupils are encouraged to exercise their imaginations and so designs and approaches to making display originality. Learning moves at a brisk pace because teachers plan effectively to maximise learning opportunities. For example, in an Early Years Foundation Stage class, groups of pupils worked quickly to make fireman's helmets and hoses, write thank-you letters and plan their puppets. Higher attaining pupils included pop-up mechanisms in their thank-you cards. Not all projects have sufficient challenge within core work and thus higher attaining pupils are sometimes provided with extension activities that stretch their literacy skills but not sufficiently their D&T thinking.
- Teachers use questioning in lessons well to ensure pupils' good understanding and any misconceptions are quickly addressed. For example, in a Year 6 lesson on pulleys and belts, confusion about what happened when the elastic band was twisted were carefully dispelled by the teacher. Homework is carefully considered and provides opportunities to enrich D&T activities. Occasionally, opportunities are missed to maximise the potential this provides for improving learning.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about D&T and enjoy the opportunities for making original products that have relevance to their own lives and the real world. This helps them to better understand scientific concepts such as the effect of friction on moving pulleys.

Quality of the curriculum in D&T

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

- The D&T curriculum is broad and balanced. It is well organised and imaginative and contributes well to cross-curricular links. Enrichment activities are very popular but limited at present. Plans are in hand to develop these. Good collaborative planning for year groups ensures that less confident and inexperienced teachers are well supported. It also ensures good progression of pupils' D&T learning from year to year. Good

use is made of external partners to enrich pupils' experiences of using materials and new technologies.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in D&T

Leadership and management in D&T are good.

- The two coordinators and senior leader are new to their roles. They share a vision and passion for the subject and are keen to develop it further. Leaders have an accurate view of the strengths and areas for development of D&T. The subject coordinators have had limited time to carry out much monitoring, but appropriate arrangements are in place to do this. Plans are in place for professional development for themselves and the staff. Good health and safety attitudes and practices securely underpin pupils' approaches to their work.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring that all activities challenge the thinking of higher attaining pupils to improve their progress and provide opportunities for them to achieve Level 5 and above.

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