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Mr I Hutton
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Hutton

Ofsted 2011–12 subject survey inspection programme: design and technology (D&T)

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 28 February 2012 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 satisfactory.

Achievement in D&T

Achievement in D&T is satisfactory.

- Children in the Reception class respond well to some good opportunities to create a simple design and handle basic tools. For example, they can use scissors with dexterity when building a rocket from recycled cardboard containers and knead modelling dough to make a planet for an alien.
- Pupils in all year groups make satisfactory progress overall to attain outcomes that are broadly in line with national expectations by the end of Key 2. However, progress in different aspects of D&T varies because there is no clear structure for the progression of skills across the school. For example, pupils in Year 6 make good progress in their understanding of how to use computers to control moving models that they have designed and built. Discussions with them confirm that they see research as a key activity in the design process and an awareness of what constitutes quality

in relation to their products. However, their knowledge of and ability to use simple tools such as saws to accurately cut wood and other materials are more limited. In contrast, pupils in Year 5 display skill in using needles and sharp scissors and make a slipper from their own designs because of good teaching.

- Pupils are very enthusiastic about D&T. They demonstrate great pride in their work, treasuring the products that they have made. All pupils display a mature approach to handling tools and working cooperatively with a partner, as seen in Year 3 when pupils helped each other to measure and cut wood in preparation for making a 'Magic Box'.

Quality of teaching in D&T

The quality of teaching in D&T is satisfactory.

- Overall, teachers exhibit appropriate levels of subject knowledge. Planning includes sufficient opportunities for pupils to research their initial ideas and experiment with techniques before designing a specific product such as a wheeled vehicle in Year 2. Good subject knowledge is demonstrated in textile work and control technology. However, this is more limited in the correct use of simple tools and joining techniques. Teachers effectively organise the use of resources in lessons and this supports their good management of pupils' behaviour. However, opportunities are often missed in lessons to use equipment such as digital projectors or visualisers to illustrate key teaching points or to check all pupils securely understand before moving learning on.
- The assessment of pupils' achievement is inconsistent in quality and inadequate overall. Despite some good practice in some year groups, the absence of collating whole-school data means that school leadership is not able to effectively monitor pupils' progress overtime.

Quality of the curriculum in D&T

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

- Statutory requirements are met and the different aspects of D&T are planned across the school. Regular opportunities for D&T are planned within an integrated topic approach to the curriculum but some aspects, such as textile work, are given greater emphasis. The absence of a planning framework to facilitate the clear progression of skills has led to some gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding such as in food technology, materials, components and the use of different tools.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in D&T

The effectiveness of leadership and management in D&T is satisfactory.

- Effective interim subject leadership has recognised areas for improvement are needed through some good self-evaluation. As a result, targets for improvement are highlighted within a detailed action plan and there is evidence of this already impacting positively on pupils outcomes.

Furthermore, partnerships with the D&T department at the local secondary school are being developed well to support improvements in provision and the expertise of staff.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring that planning provides sufficient opportunities for the progression of key skills and concepts across all aspects of the subject
- implementing assessment procedures that facilitate the monitoring of pupils' progress
- increasing the level of staff expertise and confidence in using an appropriate range of tools.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop D&T in the school.

As 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. A copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

Philip Mann
Her Majesty's Inspector