

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



8 May 2012

Mrs K Hill
Headteacher
St Mary's Catholic Primary School
Manor House Road
Wednesbury
West Midlands
WS10 9PN

Dear Mrs Hill

Ofsted 2012–13 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 25 April 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 two lessons and a brief visit to all classes.

The overall effectiveness of D&T is satisfactory.

Achievement in D&T

Achievement in D&T is satisfactory.

- Attainment at the beginning of Key Stage 1 is low, but varies from year to year. Pupils are encouraged to make a range of products and understand that they are designing and making things to meet different needs. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on how well their product meets the design brief. Plenty of opportunities are created to ensure that there is purpose to their writing. However, opportunities are missed to ensure that measuring is accurate during the making process.
- All pupils develop their capability to make a range of products. Pupils' designing capabilities are less well developed because of limited challenge in the design brief. As a result, pupils make products which are not like 'real' products and they are often made with a narrow choice of materials and components. Opportunities are missed to introduce pupils to a wider

range of materials with different properties. All groups of pupils make similar progress in designing and making and opportunities are missed to provide greater challenge for higher attaining pupils.

Quality of teaching in D&T

The quality of teaching in D&T is good.

- Relationships between staff and pupils are strong. Pupils treat everyone with courtesy and respect. Excellent classroom management ensures that teachers maintain a good pace of learning throughout the lesson and pupils move smoothly from one activity to the next. Pupils enjoy making products in D&T, but are disappointed if they do not have 'the right materials for the job'.
- Teachers' good questioning in lessons helps pupils to explain their understanding of the work. Teachers' limited knowledge of D&T means that opportunities are missed to develop pupils' deeper understanding of the underlying principles of why a product is made in a particular way. Well-planned interventions by staff ensure that all pupils are engaged in their learning and enjoy the work.

Quality of the curriculum in D&T

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

- The curriculum offers plenty of opportunities for making products which are often closely linked to work in history. Strong links are also made to literacy work. Pupils follow themes which help them to understand the importance of numeracy when designing and making. However, insufficient emphasis is placed on accuracy, or in applying scientific investigation to support their thinking and problem solving. This leads to poor progression in developing pupils' designing capability and a lack of challenge for higher attaining pupils.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in D&T

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

- The coordinator for D&T is very supportive and helpful to colleagues in planning their activities and ensuring that there is a similar approach to D&T throughout the school. However, the lack of subject-specific knowledge has limited the development of D&T.
- Health and safety procedures meet all statutory requirements. These procedures are understood well by pupils and this allows them to work independently.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- developing staff's D&T subject knowledge so that they are more confident in providing greater challenge in lessons, especially for higher attaining pupils and to ensure accurate making

- ensuring that the curriculum provides a good progression of designing skills and capabilities, and includes opportunities for pupils to work with a wider selection of materials with different properties.

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

Michelle Parker
Her Majesty's Inspector