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Mrs P Hulse
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Hulse

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 9 May 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 three lessons.

The overall effectiveness of D&T is good.

Achievement in D&T

Achievement in D&T is good.

- Skill development on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage is lower than is typical for the large majority of children. This is particularly the case in the formative skills necessary for D&T. Consistently good progress is then made by nearly all pupils throughout their time in school. By the time pupils leave Year 6, their attainment is in line with national expectations for nearly all of them and for a minority it is above expectations. Assessment information shows that the proportion attaining above the age-related expectations is growing each year. A few more able pupils do not make as rapid progress as they could because occasionally they are insufficiently challenged.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. They thoroughly enjoy their lessons in all classes where they demonstrate the ability to plan, make

decisions, question and evaluate. As one Year 6 pupil said, 'I have learnt to think ahead when planning. I work out what to do, how it will work and the right order to do things.'

Quality of teaching in D&T

The quality of teaching in D&T is good.

- Teachers' thorough subject knowledge when using a range of materials and tools combined with their enthusiasm to improve learning, result in consistently good quality teaching. Assessment information is used effectively to ensure that pupils are well supported to make good progress in lessons. For example, in a Year 1 and 2 lesson, prior knowledge of pupils' sewing skills was used effectively to group pupils so that they all received the necessary support to make good progress.
- The personalised advice and guidance also contributes to pupils' good progress. Marking is effective in guiding pupils on the next steps they need to take to improve their work. As one pupil reported: 'My teacher helped me to understand the importance of careful measuring. My model did not fit together properly, after talking to the teacher I measured carefully and it worked'.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, activities are carefully designed to resolve identified weaknesses in children's fine motor skills as well as their underdeveloped knowledge and understanding of the world and social skills. For example, children were carefully using scissors and joining techniques when making houses of different types. They cooperated well and spoke knowledgeably about the different features of houses, such as what constitutes a thatched roof. This helps to establish a good foundation for Year 1 to support pupils to further develop their ability to design and make.

Quality of the curriculum in D&T

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

- The curriculum has been improved considerably over the last three years so that it effectively underpins and enables good teaching and learning. Pupils have regular opportunities to design and make using a broad range of materials and tools. These opportunities result in continuous, regular development of knowledge, skills and understanding. Links with other subjects give the work relevance and enable literacy, numeracy, science and information and communication and technology skills to be applied and practised successfully.
- Pupils have insufficient opportunities to learn about designers and engineers or to link their projects to more relevant contexts in the wider community that would give additional purpose to pupils' work.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in D&T

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

- The well-trained coordinator, with your effective support, has driven improvements to the curriculum, teaching and learning over the last three years. Consequently, pupils, teachers, parents and carers value, enjoy and appreciate the importance and relevance of D&T in the curriculum.
- The curriculum, teaching and learning are in a constant cycle of review and refinement. Rigorous checks on the quality of pupils' work, detailed monitoring of progress and sharply focused individual training for teachers have been instrumental to this improvement.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- promoting the relevance and importance of D&T in society by:
 - increasing the opportunities for pupils to learn about the contribution of designers and engineers
 - setting more projects within real-life contexts.

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

Tim Bristow
Her Majesty's Inspector