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Mrs D Campbell
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Campbell

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Design and Technology

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 01 May 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. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included: interviews with staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of four lessons

Design and Technology

The overall effectiveness of design and technology was judged to be good and improving.

Achievement and standards

Pupils enter school with standards below national expectations. This is reflected in the standards in D&T. Achievement is good in D&T.

- Pupils enter school with poor levels of literacy and numeracy but these needs have been effectively addressed so that pupils can accurately explain their ideas and realise them in practical work. Pupils make good progress so that by the end of Key Stage 2 they achieve in line with national expectations.
- Pupils' capabilities in food, textiles and resistant materials and systems and control are equally well developed because of the carefully

structured opportunities provided for them to work in each area. The design process is understood and consistently used in all lessons. Pupils are encouraged to design their own imaginative solutions to problems. Prototypes are developed which help pupils link problems to their ideas. However, prototypes are insufficiently used in food work. Thus pupils are not always sure how different ingredients can be combined and the effect this may have on their finished product.

- Pupils enjoy D&T activities and are justly proud of the things they have made. They can explain how they made their products and the problems they encountered in designing and making them. They relish the opportunity to be creative and understand the purpose of writing and accuracy in D&T. They are critical of their work and strive to achieve high standards in the finish of their work. All groups of pupils worked maturely together and were careful to value the contribution of all members of the group.

Quality of teaching and learning of D&T

The quality of teaching and learning in design and technology is good in both key stages.

- Teaching engaged pupils' interest. Explanations were thorough and enabled pupils to work with a high degree of independence.
- Lessons were planned carefully. Learning objectives were shared and high expectations were communicated clearly to pupils. Pupils understood the tasks and the purpose for their design and making activities. Pupils made products motivated by a clear practical need for them in school such as the bag to carry their reading book in and bird boxes for the school garden. Pupils were encouraged to discuss their ideas and this helped develop their understanding of the design challenges they were set.
- The design process was well embedded through the use of common D&T booklets throughout the school. However, opportunities to further challenge higher attaining pupils were missed because pupils did not develop a specification for their products. Thus evaluations were often too superficial.
- Good cross curricular links ensured that opportunities to carry out D&T tasks were frequent and helped pupils to develop their capabilities in designing and making well. The recently made school kitchen garden enabled pupils to understand where their food comes from and linked effectively to being healthy.
- Pupils' work was effectively monitored and all work was assessed and levelled. All staff had a clear understanding of National Curriculum standards and were able to set appropriately challenging targets for all pupils.
- Teaching assistants successfully supported individual pupils and small groups. This enabled the wide ranges of abilities to be catered for well in the mixed ability teaching groups.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum in design and technology is good and improving.

- Schemes of work are well planned and matched to resources. They make good use of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's (QCA) schemes of work and have been thoughtfully adapted to meet the needs and interests of the pupils. Subject related work, particularly in supporting literacy, numeracy and science, has been used well to extend the time available for D&T activities.
- Pupils are able to gain experience in the use of CAD which together with other work in Year 6 helps them to be well prepared for the transition to high school.

Leadership and management of D&T

Leadership and management of design and technology are good and improving.

- The subject coordinator is an enthusiastic ambassador for the subject. She has effectively identified the strengths and areas for the development in the teaching of D&T. Her unassuming and supportive manner has helped all staff to feel confident in teaching D&T. She has a clear vision of how to develop the subject supported through her effective monitoring and talking with staff and pupils.
- Design and technology benefits from your vision for the school and the way in which you effectively identify and nurture the talent in your staff. The subject has thrived because of this. The school's self evaluation of D&T is accurate and forms an appropriate basis for planning.

Inclusion

- There are no differences in the achievement of boys and girls or pupils from different ethnic minority groups. Pupils with a wide range of learning disabilities and or difficulties are effectively supported and helped to work within a mainstream setting, many of whom are able to progress to mainstream secondary schools as a result of this.
- Pupils who have recently arrived in Britain and for whom English is a second language are supported effectively. Pupils are encouraged to use their home language and English to promote their learning. Parents are told of the value of this in developing their child's thinking.
- The inclusive nature of the school is also illustrated by the care and respect that pupils have for their elderly *Age Concern* learning mentors. These adult volunteers effectively support pupils from the Spring Term in Year 5 until they feel secure at their secondary school.

This has developed mutual respect between pupils and these older members of the community.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- develop prototyping in food technology to enable pupils to understand the effect combining different ingredients has on the finished food product
- include the use of specifications when designing in order to challenge higher attaining pupils further when making evaluations.

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

A copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be published on Ofsted's website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Michelle Parker
Her Majesty's Inspector