

03 May 2007

Mrs J M Caygill
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Dear Mrs Caygill

Ofsted survey inspection programme – design and technology

Thank you for your hospitality and co operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 2 May 2007 to look at work in design and technology.

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 lessons.

Design and technology

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

Achievement and standards

Pupils' achievement in design and technology (D&T) is good and standards are above average.

- Pupils' D&T capability is above average and shows good achievement and progress compared with their capability on entry to the school in Year 3.
- Attainment is good across the full range of the subject. Pupils become progressively more proficient at analysing products as well as in designing, making and testing their own products.
- Designing is functional and effective. Pupils produce simple line drawings of their designs but older pupils do not always achieve the high standards of quick design drawing of which they are capable.

- Pupils make products and use tools and materials safely and accurately although the quality of some making and the range of materials used in Year 6 are not as advanced as they could be.
- Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are very well provided for and they achieve the standards of which they are capable, except where less able pupils are not given enough help with technically difficult work.
- Pupils' creativity is stimulated well in the well structured design and make projects and pupils show clear thinking and perseverance as they create products.

Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning in D&T is good.

- Staff have well developed subject competence and have been helped to achieve this by the effort of the school to develop the subject provision. This and the strong enthusiasm for D&T of the headteacher and subject co-ordinator underpin the good provision for D&T.
- A suitably wide range of teaching methods is used, some derived from the QCA scheme of work, suitably adapted by school staff, and some from the National Strategies. Pupil activity and practical work lie at the heart of the effective teaching methods and support pupils' high level of motivation and enjoyment when engaged in D&T.
- Differentiation is built well into the teachers' planning.
- Resourcing is good and carefully matched to the curriculum taught.
- Assessment of pupils' work and progress is clear, accurate and strongly linked to the subject levels of the National Curriculum.

Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- The school's policy statement for D&T shows clear intentions which are well in tune with National Curriculum requirements and it reflects a strong desire to provide a curriculum which is relevant and interesting to pupils.
- Good use has been made of the QCA scheme of work and it has been suitably adapted by the staff to serve the needs of pupils.
- The coverage of D&T is broad and balanced as is the teaching of designing, making and testing of products.
- Good opportunities are provided for pupils to work in teams and co operate as they create products.

Leadership and management

The leadership and management of D&T are good.

- The school provides very strong support for the teaching and resourcing of D&T and the subject is highly valued.
- The experienced D&T co-ordinator has done a very good job in developing a broad and balanced coverage of the subject and in supporting staff to be able to teach it well.
- Self evaluation is sharp, accurate and evidence based. The school's view of the effectiveness of D&T at Banks Lane is congruent with that of HMI.
- Health and Safety procedures during the teaching of D&T are carefully built into the subject's planning.

Inclusion

Although in the lesson seen the girls were a little more capable than the boys, in general there is little difference between the attainments of boys and girls. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are very well served by the effective D&T teaching. The well differentiated provision also helps provide proper challenge for other pupils.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- develop more progressive teaching techniques to help pupils to capture design ideas on paper quickly as the form in their minds
- increase the technical challenge for older pupils to advance further their making skills and techniques
- consider deploying support staff to classes to help less able pupils cope with the more technically demanding parts of the subject.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop design and technology in the school.

A copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Peter Toft
Her Majesty's Inspector