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Mrs J Dunseath
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Dunseath

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Design and Technology

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 4 December 2007 to look at work in Design and Technology (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 one lesson.

Design and Technology

Provision for D&T is good overall, with some outstanding features.

Achievements and Standards

The standard of D&T capability is above average overall and in resistant materials, and systems and control, in Key Stage 2, it is outstanding.

- By the end of Year 6, pupils develop very good understanding of gears, mechanisms, control and electrics. They apply this understanding diligently as they design and make excellent functioning models of vehicles and fairground rides.
- They are able to put this technologically rigorous learning into a wider perspective as they study examples of adult technology such as the

transmissions systems of the restored tractors kept at the local farm which the pupils visit.

- Pupils design thoughtfully and to a high standard throughout the school and are given plenty of scope to think innovatively. Their evaluation of their own work and products is good.
- Progress is good throughout the school.
- Attainment, though good overall, is higher in resistant materials and systems and control than in food technology and textiles, especially in Key Stage 2. This is because the former areas of D&T are more fully covered than the latter.

Quality of teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good throughout the school and outstanding in the more technological aspects of D&T with older pupils.

- The teachers have developed good levels of subject expertise for the units of work which they teach. The coordinator's strong technical background has been of considerable assistance in this staff development.
- Staff have good relationships with the pupils, who are very well behaved and hardworking. As a result, the staff are able to give pupils ample scope to develop their own, individualised design ideas. This promotes the pupils' creativity.
- Planning is good. The units of work selected from the national scheme produced by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority are well taught and resourced. Staff are very effective in showing pupils links between these units and other subjects.
- The pupils' response to the teaching of D&T is excellent. They work hard and enjoy the creative, technological and practical elements of the subject.
- Pupils' work is regularly assessed and the schools' effective records show how they make progress from the youngest class to Year 6.
- The accommodation limits the provision of a specialist area for the hygienic teaching of food technology.

Quality of curriculum

The curriculum for D&T is good.

- D&T has a firm place within the school's broad and balanced curriculum. Adequate time is devoted overall to its teaching.
- Pupils rate the provision for D&T highly. They enjoy design and making functioning products and believe that the subject teaches qualities of use in later life such as technical skills and perseverance.
- The coverage of more "hi-tech" aspects of D&T, especially in Key Stage 2, is excellent. Provision for food technology and textiles is less extensive.

Quality of leadership and management

D&T is very well led and managed.

- You ensure that D&T, together with other foundation subjects, is effectively included in the curriculum and properly staffed and resourced.
- Though part-time and responsible for two other subjects, the D&T coordinator manages the subject well and has a clear view of how its practical and technological nature can be emphasised in the planning and teaching.
- The school's understanding of the quality and impact of its provision for D&T is accurate.
- Resources are adequate for most aspects of D&T. They are well managed and deployed in the teaching.
- Resources for food technology are very limited.
- Pupils are very well managed in classrooms.

Inclusion

D&T is taught in a highly inclusive way and all pupils are given ample opportunity to make progress.

An area for improvement, which we discussed, was:

- investigate and implement cost-effective ways of improving provision for food technology and textiles.

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

Peter Toft HMI
Ofsted Subject Adviser for D&T