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Mrs S Robertson  
Headteacher  
Forestdale Primary School  
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Dear Mrs Robertson

Ofsted survey inspection programme - Design and Technology (D&T)

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit, on 05 June 2008 to look at work in Design & 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 two lessons.

The overall effectiveness of D&T was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

Standards and achievement in D&T are good.

- Pupils enter the school nursery with standards well below the national average. By the end of Year 2 standards are about average and slightly above average by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils make good progress in developing their designing and making skills, for example, Year 2 pupils design and make a range of puppets, and pupils in Year 5 develop knowledge of mechanisms to make cam toys.
- Pupils work well in teams, developing their speaking and listening skills when explaining their ideas to others. They make informed decisions when selecting tools and materials and work with increasing accuracy as they move up through the school.
- The pupils enjoy their D&T experiences and thought that. They speak enthusiastically about how they designed their puppets, for example.

## Quality of teaching and learning

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

- Teachers are skilled in matching learning to pupils' individual needs. Teachers enjoy teaching D&T and their preparation is detailed. Practical activities are well managed with due regard to health and safety. Good questioning and answer sessions enable pupils to explore problems and to exercise and develop their thinking skills to arrive at solutions. Pupils are well behaved and engage in activities with interest and perseverance.
- Assessment is clear and straight forward and guides future teaching strategies. National Curriculum levels are not recorded at the end of Key Stages 1 or 2. However, ongoing assessment and advice is effective during lessons in helping pupils to make good progress and encourage independent learning.
- The school is well resourced, particularly in terms of information communication and technology (ICT), however this resource is not used enough by pupils. In Year 4 pupils could use simple simulation software to help them explore how electrical circuits work.

## Quality of curriculum

The quality of the D&T curriculum is good.

- The school's curriculum model is becoming topic-based and D&T is integrated effectively, using the QCA units of work to guide and support teachers.
- There are good curriculum links with art and science.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced in each age phase, but there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use ICT in their designing and making.
- The weekly 'Creative Afternoon' provides useful additional opportunities and pupils enjoy following their own interests and extend their skills in D&T.
- The school makes good use of the local community to support pupils' learning and boost specialist expertise, for example, using a local chef to work with pupils and their parents in food activities.
- D&T has made a useful contribution to the school's recent award of 'Artsmark Gold'.

## Leadership and management

Leadership and management of D&T are good.

- The subject coordinator is very enthusiastic and supports her colleagues well: their confidence in teaching D&T is developing and this helps to promote pupils' achievement. Examples of pupils' work provide evidence of good progress over time.
- Teaching assistants have had effective training and they make an effective contribution to pupils' achievement in D&T.
- There has been insufficient specialist subject training for teachers and this is recognised by the school.

## Subject Issue: Progression from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2

Pupils progress well during their time at Forestdale because the school uses the QCA units of work to guide them. Investigation and evaluation of familiar products has a positive impact in developing pupils' problem-solving skills. The quality of making improves during Key Stage 2 because appropriate emphasis is placed on focused practical tasks. This equips pupils with the skills needed for their designing and making assignments.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- a greater focus on the use of ICT to support designing and making, particularly at Key Stage 2
- provision of further professional development for teachers.

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

As I explained in my previous letter, a copy of this letter will be sent to your Local Authority and will be published on the Ofsted website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Michael Stanton  
Additional Inspector