

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404040
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



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Mr N Jones
Headteacher
Maundene School
Swallow Rise
Walderslade
Chatham
Kent
ME5 7QB

Dear Mr Jones

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Design and Technology

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 9 March 2009 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 departmental documentation, analysis of pupils' work and the observation of eight lessons.

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

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are good overall.

- Pupils enter the school with skills that are just below average for their age. They make good progress so that at the end of Key Stage 2 standards are in line with national expectations.
- Both boys and girls make good progress because work interests them equally and teachers' expectations of all pupils are high. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress because they are supported effectively.

Quality of teaching and learning of D&T

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall.

- Pupils' capability in sharing and discussing their work aids their good understanding of the lesson. Group work is effective in helping all pupils to work quickly and make faster progress. There is a high degree of co-operative and independent learning.
- Teachers' good understanding of the needs of pupils informs their planning. Consequently, activities are well matched to individual pupils' capabilities and all are appropriately challenged. This enables pupils to produce good quality work. However, pupils' projects do not include criteria for designing and making. This makes it more difficult for pupils to think critically about their work when they evaluate it.
- Teachers regularly mark work and use praise effectively to motivate pupils. However, they do not consistently explain what pupils need to do to improve or what National Curriculum level they are working towards.
- Behaviour both in lessons and around the school is outstanding. In lessons pupils co-operate well and behave with consideration and thoughtfulness towards each other. This allows teachers to be imaginative in their use of lesson time to make learning relevant. This was clearly seen in classes of younger pupils who were making fruit salads. Pupils walked to the shops and chose and bought their ingredients. Some pupils then used an interactive whiteboard independently to calculate the cost of a salad while others were helped by teachers and teaching assistants to make their salads.
- Pupils enjoy their work in D&T and use appropriate technical language to explain what they are doing. They are justly proud of their work.

Quality of the D&T curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory.

- The curriculum meets requirements. It is based on the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) schemes of work. Good links are made to literacy and numeracy and staff are beginning to plan for wider links across the curriculum. This has led to increased relevance in 'designing for a user', for example the Year 6 biscuit making project has developed strong community links with older people in the locality.

Leadership and management of D&T

Leadership and management of the subject are good.

- You are a keen proponent of D&T and recognise its value in enhancing the curriculum. You have appropriately prioritised the development of

cross curricular links which you believe will boost pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.

- The D&T coordinator is an enthusiastic leader who has carried out a detailed and accurate analysis of the strengths and weaknesses in D&T provision. This has informed her planning and she has already begun to modify projects.

The extent to which inequality and stereotyping are tackled in D&T

The school is vigilant and no inequality or stereotyping was noted during this visit.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- ensuring that all projects have success criteria for designing and making so that pupils can evaluate their work against them
- ensuring that marking evaluates the standard of pupils' work using national curriculum levels and clearly explains what pupils need to do to improve their work.

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

As explained in the previous letter, 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