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09 July 2009

Mr D Bray
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Bray

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 13 May 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 you, the subject leader for D&T, staff and learners, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of lessons.

The overall effectiveness of D&T was judged to be satisfactory and improving.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards overall are satisfactory.

- Most pupils achieve standards expected for their age by the end of Year 6. They develop practical skills well and know how to sew, cut and join materials. Their knowledge and understanding of specialist terms develops well in the middle years of Key Stage 2. However, standards and pupils' progress in D&T varies significantly between classes and year groups.
- D&T makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development. They enjoy designing and making products and this promotes their confidence and self-esteem. Some pupils say they often surprise themselves about the things they can do such as making mechanisms to make toys and monsters move. Pupils apply safety rules very well in lessons and some older pupils are beginning to consider safety when designing their products.

Quality of teaching and learning of D&T

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall.

- Pupils are enthusiastic in lessons and understand tasks: they enjoy the opportunities to discuss their ideas with each other. In all lessons a wide range of resources are used well to analyse products and support making.
- Where teaching is good tasks are modelled well for pupils and they respond to encouragement to use their own ideas. Teachers have high expectations of pupils writing in D&T. When writing evaluations pupils apply strategies very well, including using their spellings books and sounding out words, to help them.
- The content of planning is clear but teachers' knowledge and understanding of progression is insufficiently developed to ensure all groups of pupils, particularly able pupils, make sufficient progress in lessons and in all aspects of designing.
- Assessment of pupils D&T capability is at very early stages throughout the school. Pupils are unsure about how well they are doing or what their teachers think about their work.

Quality of the D&T curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory.

- The curriculum meets requirements although opportunities for pupils to cook are limited at Key Stage 2. Opportunities to use and learn about mechanisms and materials are embedded in schemes of work throughout the school.
- The curriculum is enriched by specialists and events throughout the year and pupils are well motivated by competitions and keen to participate in them.

Leadership and management of D&T

Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory.

- The impact of leadership and management is well demonstrated in the provision of good resources and in a clear vision for D&T. This is appropriately focused upon preparing pupils for a changing technological future and using designing and making skills to improve the quality of life.
- The new co-ordinator has made a positive start and has a good overview of D&T. As a result the development plan clearly identifies the key areas the school needs to tackle next to develop and strengthen practice in monitoring and evaluating and in the school's assessment processes for D&T.
- Health and safety is an integral feature of lessons and are applied very well by pupils.

The extent to which the school promotes awareness and relevance of D&T to pupils and parents and carers

- The school has a clear vision for D&T. Pupils see the relevance of D&T to future careers and the school acts on their views. However there are few opportunities for pupils to use designing and making to improve the quality of life for others.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- developing teachers' knowledge and understanding of D&T to improve the progress more able pupils make in lessons
- ensuring assessment is consistent across the teaching team and pupils understand how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

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

Gina White
Her Majesty's Inspector
Subject Adviser for Design and Technology