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Mrs S O'Flanagan
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs O'Flanagan

Ofsted 2010–11 subject survey inspection programme: design and technology (D&T)

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and pupils, during my visit on 25 June 2010 to look at work in 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 without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included interviews with staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of six lessons.

The overall effectiveness of D&T is good.

Achievement in D&T

Pupils' achievement in D&T is good.

- Pupils enter the school with abilities that are in line with age-related expectations and make good progress in D&T. They are able to explain their designs and respond with enthusiasm to develop solutions to design problems.
- Pupils enjoy the active hands-on learning in D&T and are able to produce creative work with increasing quality and sophistication.
- Skills are developed well with the range of tools and materials available and pupils are encouraged to think about environmental factors when designing.

Quality of teaching of D&T

The quality of teaching in D&T is good.

- Teachers have a clear understanding of what D&T is about and an approach to nurture and extend pupils' design and making talents. The principles that underpin design are understood clearly.
- Teachers promote a learning environment where creativity and problem-solving are encouraged so that learning is effective. Pupils are confident to try ideas and are active learners.
- Teaching is planned well and teachers know the strengths and needs of individual pupils and ensure appropriate support.

Quality of the curriculum in D&T

The quality of the curriculum in D&T is good.

- The clear rationale for the curriculum provides pupils with a range of opportunities to be creative, and to develop skills in communication and sketching and knowledge about designing.
- The school has developed the curriculum with care and recognises the need to refine it to further increase pupils' success. Further broadening of the range of materials and processes that pupils experience is required.
- Teachers make good use of the limited resources and ensure this has not inhibited pupils' progress to date. Simple electrical circuits, construction techniques and a range of materials are used to establish a firm foundation.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in D&T

Leadership and management in D&T are good.

- The subject is led by a teaching team which demonstrates good subject knowledge and a clear understanding of its purpose. Planning for health and safety is secure. Plans to enable non-specialist teachers to promote good progress and to develop assessment strategies to monitor pupils are in hand, but further training of teachers is required to support their implementation.
- A well-planned cycle of monitoring ensures D&T is properly reviewed. The recent focus on D&T identified strengths and further areas for development and this is informing future plans effectively.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- developing further teachers' confidence and skills in using a wider range of materials and techniques and, through monitoring of lessons, build upon and share good practice further
- broadening pupils' experiences through greater access to a wider range of materials and processes.

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

As I explained previously, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be published on the Ofsted website under the URN for your school. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Paul Scott
Her Majesty's Inspector