

22 May 2009

Miss C Mann
Headteacher
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Dear Miss Mann

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 12 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, a governor and parent, 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 outstanding.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards overall are outstanding.

- Children's work in the nursery and Reception classes enable them to explore and find out about the world around them. Children make with a clear purpose in mind. This provides an excellent support for their D&T work.
- A high proportion of pupils achieve above average expectations for their age and such trends of high attainment are well established in the school. Pupils make very good progress in all aspects of designing and making. The wide range of contexts for D&T activities provide very good and focussed opportunities for pupils to apply their D&T skills effectively. For example, pupils create original designs for cocktails, and fairground rides. They can identify opportunities to design and make products which recycle, and reuse materials in response to well focussed challenges to

explore sustainability. Older pupils are aware of constraints in making and consider them carefully when designing products.

- Pupils' personal development is excellent. Pupils enjoy D&T and are challenged by it. Their attitudes to learning are first rate. They learn how to use tools and equipment safely and apply their knowledge effectively in their lessons. Older pupils are learning to persevere and they use team working skills well in paired and group work. Pupils work with a high degree of independence and are developing key skills to present and explain their designs to others.

Quality of teaching and learning of D&T

The quality of teaching and learning overall is outstanding.

- Lessons are well planned and the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good or better. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the projects they teach. Excellent use of high quality resources supports pupils learning and a wide range of teaching and learning strategies and well chosen activities engage pupils thoroughly in lessons.
- High quality questioning by teachers and learning assistants and good use of role play and video help pupils to analyse how products work. Such strategies, together with effective use of discussion, characterise lessons and contribute significantly to pupils' progress and enthusiasm.
- Assessment of pupils' D&T capability is consistent throughout the school and is used effectively by teachers to guide their next steps when planning lessons. Pupils understand the process and are involved in self-assessment. They can identify why some products fail and take action to improve them. More emphasis on the impact that their design decisions have on the way the products work would usefully enhance evaluation.

Quality of the D&T curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is outstanding.

- Regular reviews of the curriculum ensure it meets pupils' needs and is securely focussed on developing pupils' understanding of how products work. Opportunities to cook and to use electronic components, structures and mechanisms are firmly embedded.
- D&T is used in meaningful ways across the curriculum and such work is well planned. For example, pupils' designs and thoughts about the musical instruments they are making draws effectively on their scientific knowledge of sound and hearing.
- The use of visits, after school cooking club, and week long activities such as 'Dragons Den', contribute effectively to enriching opportunities for pupils learning. The variety and high quality of this work contributes significantly to pupils' enjoyment and understanding of the relevance of D&T.

Leadership and management of D&T

Leadership and management of the subject are outstanding.

- D&T is exceptionally well led by the deputy headteacher. She has established a clear vision for D&T and effective systems to regularly monitor and evaluate teaching and learning. Very good use is made of the subject leader's expertise to develop high quality resources and guidance to support new and experienced teachers in confidently, and safely, teaching D&T. The impact of this work is well demonstrated in pupils' achievement and standards.

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

- The school's vision for D&T is shared widely and demonstrated thoroughly in pupils' work.
- The involvement of parents and carers is very good: effective use is made of their specialist skills to support pupils' learning. Pupils enjoy a wide range of activities but some would like more choice in the products they make.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- ensuring all pupils are aware of the opportunities they have to make decisions about their work and to evaluate the impact of them on the products they design and make.

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