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Mrs Pauline Mulholland
Headteacher
Bedlington Station First School
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Dear Mrs Mulholland

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Design and Technology

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on Friday 18 May 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 relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of lessons.

Design and Technology

The overall effectiveness of D&T was judged to be good and confirms your self evaluation.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in D&T are good.

- Pupils start at the school with skills and capabilities which are well below average. In the Foundation Stage, many pupils find it difficult initially to use basic equipment such as pencils and scissors when engaged in practical work. They make good progress, however.
- They start at Key Stage 1 with below average standards. They achieve well and again make good progress so that by the end of year 4, standards are average.

- Pupils demonstrate a secure knowledge and understanding of D&T. They use equipment and materials effectively to design and make a wide range of products. As a result, their capabilities in the subject are well developed.
- They understand how to routinely evaluate and revise designs which are both creative and practical. Pupils are enthusiastic and positive about D&T. They enjoy the subject, behave well in D&T lessons, and work safely when using practical equipment.

Quality of teaching and learning

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

- Teachers' subject knowledge is consistently good and they are enthusiastic in their support for the subject.
- The teaching of design is lively and creative.
- Lesson planning is thorough and presents a level of challenge which works well according to need and ability. Work is differentiated effectively and the more capable are given increasingly complex tasks.
- There is room to refine the already good pace of lessons with more practical work.
- Teachers recognise the value of good quality materials and use them very well.
- Assessment practice is good and makes sure capability is recorded against National Curriculum levels.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good with some outstanding features.

- The time allocated for D&T is appropriate and there is a wide range of activities to hold pupils' interest.
- They use a good variety of components and materials when designing and making. Subject knowledge is good and could be further extended by increasing opportunities to learn in more depth, for example about complex mechanisms and the use of more advanced tools and equipment.
- The coverage of key design skills such as routine evaluation when making and the generation of ideas is an outstanding feature.
- Another outstanding feature is the work undertaken with visiting artists and crafts specialists.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management of D&T are good.

- The quality of leadership and the way the subject is consistently planned, organised, managed and evaluated is good at all levels.

- The performance of the subject is closely monitored and school evaluations are accurate. Self evaluation is well evidenced through high quality records which include photographs and examples of pupils work.
- The school's management capacity to ensure D&T can thrive is excellent.

Inclusion

The contribution which D&T makes to inclusion is good.

- Boys and girls are doing equally as well.
- The school is fully inclusive and support for pupils with learning difficulties in D&T is good.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- refining the already good pace of lessons with more practical work
- extending opportunities to learn in more depth at an earlier age.

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

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

Paul Hancock
Her Majesty's Inspector