

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



13 October 2010

Mr S Mackay
Headteacher
Sir William Romney's School
Lowfield Road
Tetbury
Gloucestershire
GL8 8AE

Dear Mr Mackay

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 students, during my visit on 21 and 22 September 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 students; scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of students' work, and observation of five lessons.

The overall effectiveness of D&T is satisfactory.

Achievement in D&T

Students' achievement in D&T is satisfactory.

- Most students start Year 7 with skills and capabilities in D&T which are similar to those normally found. Achievement is satisfactory, largely due to the quality of work produced in resistant materials and the change in courses at GCSE. Good support is given by extra adults in lessons so that those who have special educational needs/and or disabilities, along with those who struggle with their learning do as well as their peers.
- In the past, students have made significantly better progress in resistant materials compared with food technology. This achievement gap is being reduced due to the firm action taken and support given by senior leaders. Nevertheless, further changes need to be made to ensure improvements

are sustained and that students undertaking food and the new graphics GCSE achieve their potential.

Quality of teaching of D&T

The quality of teaching is satisfactory.

- Plans and schemes of work are adequate. Long-term planning and assessment systems give students and their parents/carers a good idea about the progress made in D&T and inform them of the student's target D&T National Curriculum level or predicted GCSE grade. In short-term planning, insufficient attention is given to ensure that work is based on enhancing students' prior learning, is increasingly challenging and that all activities meet the needs of the most-able students.
- Teachers' management of lessons is generally effective in securing students' interest and engagement with their learning. The new D&T project books used by students in Key Stage 3 successfully encourage self-reflection and peer review. Students of all ages do not have enough opportunities to accurately assess themselves against D&T National Curriculum level descriptors or GCSE grade criteria. This reduces their independence and resilience. Consequently, students are overly dependent on adult advice, and encouragement, to aim for levels or grades higher than those predicted by staff.

Quality of the curriculum in D&T

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

- The schemes of work for resistant materials allow students to try more equipment and techniques than those for food technology. As a result, students enjoy these lessons more and make good progress in them. In Key Stage 3, some activities are not appropriate. For example, designing and making posters, and food activities do not always reflect students' prior learning and experiences. The school accurately identifies that opportunities to learn about and to use electronics and control are limited in the current schemes of work.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in D&T

Leadership and management in D&T are satisfactory.

- The school listens carefully to what students feel about D&T. They have changed and adapted courses to increase students' enjoyment and thus achievement. For example, students were not enjoying their textiles lessons in Years 7 to 9 and as a result few were opting to follow a course at GCSE. Subsequently, the school has chosen to change the option at GCSE to graphics, which has proved popular with boys and girls. Although the school has effectively adapted the current Key Stage 3 curriculum to reflect this change, those currently in Year 10 and 11 studying graphics have not benefited from this and will need further intensive guidance and support.

- The school does not analyse D&T attainment and prior experiences on entry in sufficient depth. The baseline assessment is not rigorous or early enough in Year 7 to ensure that the needs of more able or more experienced students are being met.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- increasing the amount of challenge and pace of learning for more able students
- developing a better curriculum in Key Stage 3 to include greater use of systems and control components when designing and making products
- analysing D&T attainment in more depth when students start in Year 7 and using this to produce an early rigorous baseline assessment.

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 published on the Ofsted website. It may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection. Except in the case of academies, a copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

Steffi Penny
Her Majesty's Inspector