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Ms C McCormack
Headteacher
Holy Trinity Catholic Media Arts College
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Dear Ms McCormack

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 1 and 2 February 2011 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 lessons.

The overall effectiveness of D&T is satisfactory.

Achievement in D&T

Students' achievement in D&T is satisfactory.

- Students make satisfactory progress in D&T, many from lower starting points than normally found. Attainment in the specialist areas is close to average by the end of Key Stage 3. In 2010, GCSE results for about a quarter of the students who took D&T at Key Stage 4 were above average in food technology and below in graphic products. The current Year 11 students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are on track to achieve better results in both subjects. Students enjoy taking responsibility for their own design ideas and thinking. Information and communication technology is effectively used to research and present design information.

Quality of teaching of D&T

The quality of teaching is satisfactory.

- The college accurately evaluates the quality of teaching in D&T. Lessons are effectively planned, managed and delivered. The teaching encourages students to work with accuracy and precision, developing their own innovative design thinking. For example, Year 11 students designed original packaging for luxury chocolate bars. Teaching in D&T meets the needs of a wide ability range of students who are encouraged to learn at an appropriate pace. Assessment practice is effective and the analysis of information has recently improved. The college knows that developing systems to check individual progress more frequently at Key Stage 3 is an area to develop.

Quality of the curriculum in D&T

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

- A suitable range of materials and resources is used in Years 7 and 8. Needs and interests are less well met as students move through the more senior years because the D&T curriculum is limited to graphic products and food technology. The college is aware that product design, systems and control could meet students' interest in learning about up-to-date technology, together with the integration of computer-aided design and manufacture into project work.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in D&T

Leadership and management in D&T are satisfactory.

- Senior leaders support D&T effectively. College self-evaluation has identified the need to improve subject leadership to provide a more accurate picture of the areas for improvement and a clear vision for the future of the subject. Teachers and support staff work closely as a team to provide individual support for learning. D&T classroom leadership and management contribute well to developing students' capability in lessons.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- broadening the range of activities and courses as students move through the college
- improving the quality of subject leadership
- monitoring individual progress in more depth, particularly at Key Stage 3.

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

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

Paul Hancock
Her Majesty's Inspector