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Mr M Lantos
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Dear Mr Lantos

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 10 and 11 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 five lessons.

The overall effectiveness of D&T is inadequate.

Achievement in D&T

Achievement in D&T is inadequate.

- Students enter the school with prior experience in designing and making products. Their attainment on entry to the school is broadly in line with expectations for their age. However, their prior experiences are not built on sufficiently to enable them to make adequate progress in developing their designing and making capabilities. The school does not check their progress in D&T or report to their parents and carers on the National Curriculum levels they attain by the end of Key Stage 3.
- Around 20–30% of students choose to study D&T at Key Stage 4. In response to a carefully structured course in graphic product design, students achieve GCSE results that are above the national average. The majority of students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress, in line with the school's

expectations. Students currently undertaking the course in Years 10 and 11 are making stronger progress in developing a range of practical skills in a short amount of time. They are keen to develop and improve these further. As a result of extensive support and intervention students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are making better progress in managing their work and meeting deadlines.

Quality of teaching of D&T

The quality of teaching of D&T is inadequate.

- Teachers are specialists in other subjects and they acknowledge that they have limited knowledge or experience of teaching D&T. Consequently, lesson planning at Key Stage 3 does not specifically cover D&T knowledge or skills development. Students are enthusiastic about designing and making and are impatient for such learning opportunities to be extended to those in Years 7 to 9. The school is aware of this and plans are in place to extend opportunities.
- The preparation and use of resources to support learning are stronger features of the teaching at Key Stage 4. Students are developing a greater awareness of well-designed products following a recent workshop at the Design Museum. Teachers use demonstrations well in graphic products lessons to convey to students what they are required to do. A strong focus on subject vocabulary in each lesson enables students to understand the meaning and context of materials and techniques. Teachers use targeted questioning well and students are learning how to structure their answers in readiness for examinations. Students receive helpful feedback to enable them to take the next step in their coursework.

Quality of the curriculum in D&T

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

- Provision at Key Stage 4 ensures that students' entitlement to study at least one D&T course is met. Students undertaking the D&T course in graphic products enjoy the opportunities to use their own ideas to create packaging and games. Some students incorporate the use of plastic materials and learn basic techniques to form and shape them. Students are developing a sound understanding of the theory of materials and processes. However, students want opportunities to learn and apply designing and making skills to a wider range of products and contexts.
- Provision at Key Stage 3 does not meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. The school highlights where other subjects share similar key concepts and provides opportunities to link to D&T but this falls short of the requirements. Students are unable to apply their knowledge, skills and understanding of the key concepts and key processes of D&T using tools and equipment to design and make systems and products using computer-aided design and manufacture, resistant materials and food or textiles.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in D&T

Leadership and management in D&T are inadequate.

- Systems for tracking and monitoring students' performance in graphic products are in place. Underachieving students are identified and interventions in the form of extra time at lunchtimes and after school are securing success for some students. However, the school has not ensured that this is in place at Key Stage 3.
- Senior leaders' plans to reintroduce discrete teaching of D&T are a positive step towards tackling the significant weaknesses in provision at Key Stage 3. Specialist accommodation and resources to support the introduction of food technology are advancing. However, the school has yet to secure specialist D&T training and staffing to realise these plans and ensure that students receive the D&T education that they are entitled to.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring that the National Curriculum requirements are met
- ensuring that staff are trained to teach D&T at Key Stage 3
- ensuring that students' progress in Key Stage 3 is monitored, assessed and reported to parents and carers.

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

Gina White
Her Majesty's Inspector