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Mrs C Rourke  
Headteacher  
Fazakerley High School  
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Dear Mrs Rourke

### **Ofsted 2011–12 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 11 and 12 January 2012 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 eight lessons.

The overall effectiveness of D&T is good.

#### **Achievement in D&T**

Achievement in D&T is good.

- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 was significantly below the national average in 2009 with 18% of students gaining A\* to C grades. The department has made significant progress in ensuring the success of students; 63% now gain A\* to C grades of which 18.9% gain A\* and A grades, slightly more than the national average. There is some difference in the achievement of boys and girls but this varies from year to year and across the different material areas. The department is aware of this and teachers adjust their planning to meet the students' needs. However, further opportunities are required to ensure that higher attaining students are better challenged. Well considered support to students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and others whose circumstances make them vulnerable, ensures that they make similarly

good progress to other groups and some make exceptional progress. The introduction of BTEC courses has helped students with special educational needs and/or disabilities to understand the steps needed to achieve higher levels. Effective monitoring and tracking of all students coupled with individual mentoring and support ensures that staff quickly address the needs of any student identified as underperforming. Homework is well planned to further develop students' understanding of lessons. Key vocabulary is identified and practised and the department is working hard to improve students' oral skills and confidence in expressing their ideas.

- Key Stage 3 students learn basic skills well although they do not always make links across the different material areas to promote a deeper understanding of the design process.
- Sixth form students are highly motivated and set themselves challenging tasks, but they lack confidence to aspire to reach to the highest grades. They understand and explore the work of designers effectively and apply the new insights and skills that they gain to their own work.

### **Quality of teaching in D&T**

The quality of teaching in D&T is good.

- Relationships are a strength of the department. Students value the support and time given to them in helping them with their work. Staff are excellent role models and work alongside students to discuss their work and demonstrate different approaches. Students enjoy D&T and an increasing number are pursuing their interest post-16 and for their careers.
- In lessons, teachers explain modern manufacturing techniques and encourage students to become familiar with these processes. However, students have insufficient opportunities to work with modern and smart materials. Assessment opportunities are used effectively to support students' understanding of how to improve their work; for example, in a Year 9 textiles lesson, students made supportive and insightful comments about each other's work.

### **Quality of the curriculum in D&T**

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

- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Strong partnership working with mathematics and science departments, other schools and business partners such as Jaguar Land Rover and Scottish Power enhances and enriches students' experience of D&T. Curriculum plans place an emphasis on promoting students' awareness of manufacturing techniques and enable them to develop creative solutions to real problems.
- The department is proactive in developing curriculum opportunities to ensure that every student can gain a qualification through the wide range of accreditation available from diplomas to GCSEs and BTEC qualifications.

## **Effectiveness of leadership and management in D&T**

The effectiveness of leadership and management in D&T is outstanding.

- The leadership of the department is characterised by high levels of subject expertise and effective collegiate working. The departmental vision is shared by all, including the technicians and support staff. This ensures a truly inclusive department focused on improving teaching and learning in all it does. Well-considered continuous professional development is at the heart of the department's improvements and is closely matched to meet the priorities in the department and school development plans.
- All resources and practices, including health and safety, are well planned and support students' learning. Partnerships with parents and carers and the wider community are excellent. Behaviour throughout the department is excellent and supports students' good learning.

### **Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:**

- ensuring that students' design capabilities are developed and extended to provide more challenge and complexity to improve their chances of gaining A\* and A grades at GCSE.

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

As 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. A copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

**Michelle Parker**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**