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Ms Z King
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Dear Ms King

Ofsted 2012–13 subject survey inspection programme: design and technology (D&T)

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and students, during my visit on 12 and 13 June 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 four lessons, and parts of a further seven lessons during two learning walks.

The overall effectiveness of D&T is satisfactory.

Achievement in D&T

Achievement in D&T is satisfactory.

- Most Year 11 students are making satisfactory progress, and some make good progress from their starting points on entry to the school. Students in Year 10 are becoming more self-reliant in managing their coursework, and are learning to apply a limited range of methods to research and refine their designs. Students, at both Key Stages make faster progress in food technology than in other aspects of the subject. Students who arrive at the school midway through the year quickly have their needs assessed and most settle well into their learning programmes.
- Students are learning to use computer-aided design to support their designing and making. They know how to use nutrition modelling to make changes to recipes. Students follow instructions and use tools and

equipment safely. Students' knowledge and skills required to work independently, plan, evaluate and make informed design decisions are underdeveloped at Key Stage 3 as a result of limitations in the resistant materials schemes of work.

Quality of teaching in D&T

The quality of teaching in D&T is satisfactory.

- Teachers' knowledge of specialist processes and techniques is well demonstrated and used to good effect. Students' interest and engagement in practical activities is high and they work with determination to complete what is asked of them. For example, students experiment with ingredients to create original ideas for food products and understand the problems they must solve when creating shapes to vacuum form. Where teaching is effective, clear learning objectives are shared with students at the start of the lessons. Students made swifter progress in learning when they knew what was expected of them and worked with greater independence on tasks. However this was not consistent across all lessons.
- Some students are investing much time and effort in completing homework. Some good examples of feedback to students help them to improve their work, however the approach to marking and feedback is inconsistent, particularly at Key Stage 3.

Quality of the curriculum in D&T

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

- Key Stage 4 courses are developing well to closely reflect the requirements of the syllabus. Teachers are using their training effectively to sharpen students understanding of assessment criteria. Opportunities to attend extra-curricular sessions, such as cooking club, and additional support are helping students to develop a deeper understanding of making and designing. This is serving to tackle gaps in Year 10 and 11 students' knowledge and skills as a result of disruption to their learning in previous years. Resources are used well to ensure that students' knowledge and understanding of computer-aided design develops. Curriculum time and schemes of work for food technology ensure that extensive opportunities are provided for students to develop basic food preparation skills and to learn about nutrition.
- The Key Stage 3 curriculum is planned separately in the different materials and this does not help students to make connections in their learning across the subject as a whole. Schemes of work have some important gaps and students' learning about modern technologies, new materials and awareness of industrial manufacturing is underdeveloped.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in D&T

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

- Both subject leaders know what is expected of them and are well supported in their roles by senior leaders in the school. Staff training has contributed effectively to the recent improvement in Key Stage 4 courses and students' achievement. Both subject leaders separately plan, review and evaluate progress in the aspects of D&T that they are responsible for and no joint vision is in place to guide the development of the subject. The advantages of developing a joined-up approach to leading and managing the subject are known and recent collaborative work augurs well for swiftly achieving this.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- raising standards and ensuring that students make swifter progress by:
 - improving the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that every lesson includes clear objectives, focused on what students will know, understand and be able to do
 - developing a shared vision to guide the subject and adopt consistent approaches to assessment, monitoring and improvement planning
 - ensuring that the curriculum is planned coherently and collaboratively to enable students to learn about modern technologies, new materials and develop their awareness of industrial manufacturing.

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.

Yours sincerely

Gina White
Her Majesty's Inspector