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Mr Tadeusz Zaranko  
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Dear Mr Zaranko

Ofsted survey inspection programme – design and technology (D&T)

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 26-27 September 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. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included: interviews with staff and students, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of students' work and observation of 10 lessons.

The overall effectiveness of D&T was judged to be satisfactory.

#### Achievement and standards

- Standards on entry in D&T are well below national expectation. By the end of Key Stage 3 and 4 standards remain well below national averages.
- Examination results in 2005 show that boys achieve well in D&T given their starting points. All students make satisfactory progress in learning how to make products in wood, metal and plastics. They use tools and machinery safely but their designing skills are weak.
- Students undertaking GCSE courses receive regular advice and guidance from their teachers which they find useful and consequently most are making satisfactory progress towards achieving their targets.

- Teachers' marking of pupils work at Key Stage 3 is insufficiently focussed on identifying what they need to do to improve and reach the next level.
- Students' personal development is satisfactory. Attitudes and behaviour are mostly good. Students work co-operatively together and with teachers. Older students particularly enjoy making products that they have designed themselves and they say that what they learn in D&T is usefully preparing them for life generally. Younger students enjoy D&T because of the emphasis the school places on selecting products that they want to make.
- They have few opportunities to develop independent learning skills to promote their economic well-being. Encouragement to take creative risks, develop enterprise and innovation are insufficiently promoted in D&T.

### Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning of D&T is satisfactory.

- Teacher's knowledge and understanding of craft and drawing techniques are used soundly. Strategies to support older students in researching and investigating design problems promote their understanding and help them to make progress in lessons.
- Too little attention is given in teachers' planning and in lessons to enable students in Year 8 and 9 to progressively develop skills to design, plan and evaluate the products they make and to acquire and use other project management skills such as investigation, research and decision making.

### Quality of Curriculum

The D&T curriculum is inadequate.

- Plans to introduce additional resources to enable pupils to study food technology are well advanced in the school. However several important gaps in the curriculum restrict pupils' experiences to develop design and technology capability. Opportunities to use textiles and computer aided design and manufacture (CAD/CAM) are limited.
- In addition, pupils have little understanding of modern manufacturing methods, new technologies or the work of designers.

### Leadership and Management

Leadership and management of D&T are satisfactory.

- Support staff play an effective role in providing technical advice to pupils and in preparing resources; this helps to promote a smooth start to lessons.

- Self-evaluation accurately identifies strengths and issues for development, many of which are longstanding. Actions and plans to tackle them are at an early stage of development.

## Inclusion

Pupils who arrive mid-year are well supported with individual teacher and technician support and extra curricular sessions help them to settle quickly into lessons and catch-up. Carefully explained step-by-step demonstrations help learners with difficulties and disabilities to make good progress in acquiring practical skills.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- to ensure the programme of work at Key Stage 3 is broad and balanced to enable students to progressively develop knowledge and understanding of modern manufacturing methods, the work of designers and new technologies and to experience using a wider range of materials and CAD/CAM
- to ensure teaching and learning at Key Stage 3 progressively develop students' designing skills and strategies to enable them to become independent learners
- to ensure that all marking of students' work promotes improvement.

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

A copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be published on Ofsted's website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Gina White  
Her Majesty's Inspector