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Mr A Key  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Key

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Design and Technology

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 11 December to look at work in Design and Technology (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 learners, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of lessons.

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

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are good.

- Students make good progress and standards are above average at the end of Key Stage 4. The school knows some boys are not doing as well as girls by the end of Key Stage 3 but they quickly catch up at Key Stage 4.
- The number of students gaining higher GCSE grades in the subject is good although results vary significantly across the specialist areas, from well below average in food technology to well above average in textiles. Good achievement and standards in food technology was seen at Key Stage 3, indicating a trend of improvement. Achievement and standards in the sixth form are good with many students meeting and exceeding their predicted grades.

- D&T is making a good contribution to the personal development and well being of students. They enjoy the challenges presented by the subject and discuss their experiences in D&T with interest and enthusiasm.

### Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning in D&T is good.

- Subject knowledge is consistently good. There is a strong emphasis on designing and making good quality products which pupils can be proud of, for example mobile phone holders in Year 7.
- Lessons are well managed and delivered. The balance of teaching moves quickly from a high input of knowledge and skills to students learning more for themselves through individual project work.
- Assessment is effective and makes sure D&T capability is recorded against National Curriculum levels and examination target grades. Students know how well they are doing in D&T and individual support to help them improve is very good.

### Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- At Key Stage 3, students experience a suitable variety of activities across the specialist areas which meet their needs and interests well.
- Schemes of work make sure all aspects of designing and making are covered and are successfully aligned to examination requirements. The coverage of key making skills such as technical accuracy and high standards of finish is very thorough.
- Students' knowledge and understanding of D&T is well secured through a curriculum which allows them to quickly learn how to design and make for themselves.

### Leadership and management of D&T

Leadership and management of D&T are good.

- Data is well analysed and the performance of the subject is closely monitored. Learning and achievement are central to the work of a very effective team.
- Self evaluation is accurate. The school and the department know their strengths and weaknesses well and are taking the right action to make sure D&T continues to thrive and improve.

## Inclusion

Changes in provision are improving the performance of boys at Key Stage 3. Other groups of pupils achieve equally well including those with learning difficulties.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- the significant variation in results across the specialist areas at Key Stage 4
- using teacher assessment data after the first project in Year 7 to provide evidence of attainment in D&T when students start at the school.

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

As I explained in my previous letter, a copy of this letter will be sent to your Local Authority and will be published on the Ofsted website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Paul Hancock  
Her Majesty's Inspector