

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404040
F 020 7421 6855
www.ofsted.gov.uk
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk



18 February 2008

Miss A Rowley
Headteacher
The Wavell School
Lynchford Road
Farnborough
Hampshire
GU14 6BH

Dear Miss Rowley

Ofsted survey inspection programme –
Design and Technology (D&T) and Art and Design

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit with Chris Shaw on 4-5 February to look at work in D&T and in Art and Design.

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 lessons.

Design and Technology

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

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in D&T are broadly satisfactory.

Almost all students follow a D&T subject to examination level as required of a Technology College. The combined results at GCSE level for D&T last year at grades A* to C were slightly below the national average but boys results in particular were well below the national average. At Key Stage 3, students build on the broadly average standard of prior attainment with generally satisfactory progress, although boys do not make as much progress as they

could, or as much as the girls. Attainment at the end of the key stage is broadly average with girls' standards often higher than boys'.

- In the GCSE examinations last year the number of students gaining the highest grade of A and A* was higher than in most schools. The numbers gaining A*-G grades was similar to the national picture. However, the average grade obtained was slightly lower than most schools. Often students do not do as well in D&T as they do in their other subjects and boys, particularly average attainers, often do significantly worse.
- In the GCSE examination in 2007, students following the Resistant Materials course did not do as well as in their other subjects. Although the number of grades A and A* was high, the number of students gaining an A* to C grade was well below the national average, as was the number gaining grades A* to G.
- Last year the GCSE results in Food Studies were the best in D&T. All students gained a grade A* to G, many at the highest grades. The number of students gaining A* to C grades was well above the national average. All students entered passed, with grades higher than in many of their other subjects.
- In Graphic Products last year, girls did as well as their other subjects but boys did slightly worse. Girls did particularly well at gaining A and A* grades but less well at A* to C grades compared with the national picture. Boys' results generally were in line with the national averages.
- Students enter the school with a generally sound, but variable, knowledge of the National Curriculum from their Primary school. In Key Stage 3 they follow a series of modules so that they design and make products in resistant materials (wood, metal and plastics), textiles, graphic materials, systems and control, structures and food. At the end of the key stage they have covered the National Curriculum although their experience and understanding of modern 'Smart' materials is limited. In this Key Stage, too, boys' attainment, and their achievement, is below that of girls. The changes recently made to the curriculum are improving rates of progress.
- Students are able to study and produce a good range of textile and food products in line with the national recommendation.

Quality of teaching and learning of D&T

Overall the quality of teaching and learning is good.

- Generally teaching is good, helped by improved schemes of work and the effective lesson plans, enabling students to learn well. Teachers have very good relationships with the students, which develop and improve progressively as students move through the school.
- In some lessons students' progress is limited by the cramped conditions in the rooms. Sometimes it is difficult for students to see the teachers' demonstration because there is insufficient space for them to spread out and see clearly. On other occasions, because rooms have to be used for a range of subjects, the time taken to get out and put away resources

disturbs the smooth running and effectiveness of the lesson. Although in my observations I did not see any unsafe practices, there are issues of health and safety in lessons, particularly practical and workshop based lessons, because the floor space per pupil is well below that recommended in the relevant British Standard.

- The alterations to the curriculum and improved focus on learning is starting to raise standards, but further strategies are needed to ensure boys make the progress of which they are capable. Students in Key Stage 3, both boys and girls, told the inspector that girls tended to work harder and concentrate more and that boys were more relaxed and set lower standards. Students who became independent learners, particularly girls, were able to make good progress because they set high standards for themselves, and their work.
- There is evidence to suggest improvements in teaching in Key Stage 4 with better control of students' coursework and more regular marking and feedback. There are still inconsistencies that need to be addressed. Students told the inspector that they are committed to the courses they are following because they enjoy using the materials they have chosen and would not wish to give up D&T. They say that they concentrate hard and know their teachers will help them. They receive regular feedback that spurs them on.
- Teachers know their subjects well and are keen to embrace the latest developments. The additional equipment makes the management of space even more critical. Although ICT is well used, some of the ICT suites are taken out of service because they are being used as general teaching rooms because of shortage of specialist accommodation. Some lap top computers would mitigate the impact, but not solve it.
- In lessons, teachers offered to support students outside school hours to complete coursework to the highest grade possible. They want their students to do well and they are concerned for them. Teachers give freely of their time. Good relationships are a strong feature of the school. Teachers, and students, are skilful at welcoming the numerous new starters and helping them to settle in and start to make good progress.
- The electronic projector is well used and integrated into many lessons. There are good quality learning resources prepared by the teachers. Homework is set regularly, to extend learning.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory with some good features.

- The time given to D&T in the first three years is similar to most schools. In Years 7 and 8 a series of modules is taught in three periods a week. In Year 9 the time is reduced to two periods because of pressures on the curriculum. The structure and organisation of the modules have been redeveloped over the last year and this is starting to improve interest and raise standards.
- The modules cover manufacturing products in wood, metal and plastics;

textiles; food technology; electronics; systems and control; structures and graphic products. These are supported by some use of computer aided design and computer aided manufacturing (CAD/CAM). All the activities are well planned and structured.

- The curriculum can only be delivered because the staff work flexibly. They are able to work outside their specialisms and contribute their broad skills to the department. Accommodation too is limited, not only in quantity but in size. In consequence modules have to be taught in rooms that have been designed for another purpose and temporarily equipped for another material. An example is a room designed for teaching control that is also used for teaching textiles. This puts pressure on teachers, and students, who are working in cramped conditions, which they do cheerfully.
- At Key Stage 4, students are given a good choice in a Technology option of GCSE courses in - Resistant Materials, Graphic Products and Food Studies and Performing Engineering Operations Engineering at a local College. However, not all students who want to follow a Food Studies course are able to do so because of insufficient accommodation. The number of students who join the school in Years 10 and 11 is high, and often they are forced to study D&T subjects that they are not interested in because many groups are full. This has an impact on standards.
- ICT is well used across all the subject materials but CAD and CAM are not fully available in all areas.
- In discussions with students in every year they enjoyed their D&T lessons because they recognise that they make progress lesson after lesson.

Leadership and management of D&T

Leadership at whole school level and within the D&T department is good.

- The school is committed to D&T and you and the governors support the development of the subject in the school. The Technology College status is making a significant impact on the life of the school and within the local community.
- You have striven tirelessly to improve the accommodation for D&T, which has been accepted by specialists within the authority as not fit for purpose.
- The new subject leader is working hard with her colleagues to improve the shape and delivery of the curriculum. All are committed to raising standards and removing the significant differences that there are between boys' and girls' attainment and achievement. A good start has been made.

Inclusion

Inclusion is good.

- The school is very sensitive to the needs of students who join the school at varying times throughout the year, and it meets their needs well. Teachers are skilful at inducting students into their new lessons. Students'

relationships are very good. The school is an open and caring community. Students with special educational needs are well integrated into the life of the class and make similar progress to the rest of the group.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- raising standards of achievement, particularly that of boys, so that all learners make the progress of which they are capable
- improve the range and quality of accommodation to meet the needs of the curriculum and the requirements of a Technology College, and to reduce the overcrowding in lessons.

Art & Design

The overall effectiveness of art and design was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in art and design are good.

- Students enter the school with below average skills, knowledge and understanding in art. Many start with weak drawing skills and show limited confidence in exploring different media or working independently.
- Good teaching and the willingness of students to learn contribute to good progress. Average standards are attained by the end of Year 9. They gain confidence and independence, develop a good visual vocabulary in a range of 2D media and learn to incorporate the ideas of other artists into their own work.
- Students make good progress in the GCSE lessons and standards reached in 2007 were above average. Boys did particularly well when compared with the national average and in relation to their other subjects. Current work is nearer to average but achievement is still good when the students' Year 9 results are taken into account.
- Different groups of students, including those with ethnic backgrounds and with English as a second language achieve equally well in the subject.
- Students build effectively on the skills, knowledge and understanding they develop in Years 7-9 to make work with rich textures, interesting shapes and vibrant colours, for example the lively sculptures based on the work of Antoni Gaudi. Their ability use ICT to design, manipulate and modify art work is underdeveloped.
- Students do not sufficiently develop the vocabulary and literacy skills that are needed to analyse qualities in their own and others' work. However, they are beginning to understand the need to be self-critical and reflect on examination criteria in order to improve.
- Students enjoy art lessons and are keen to do well. They develop very good relationships with the teachers and feel safe and well supported.

Quality of teaching and learning

Teaching and learning in art and design are good.

- The teachers are very sympathetic to the needs of all students. Teachers prepare lessons that take into account the different ways and speed at which students learn. The individual support and advice given is rewarded with students' commitment and enthusiasm in lessons and in between when many continue to work in the department.
- In the most effective lessons, students are given opportunities to compare their own work with that of their peers and other examples shared by the teacher. However, this is an inconsistent feature of teaching because questioning is not always sufficiently challenging, particularly for the most able students.
- The clear and consistent marking to national guidelines gives students a clear idea of what they need to do to improve. There is a good balance of praise, positive comments and pointers for improvement.
- Homework is achievable, practical and sometimes inspires students to develop new ideas. Sketchbooks become an increasingly valuable record of students' work as they move through the school.
- Teachers use online and other computer resources to introduce topics and provide source material but ICT has little impact on the work of students beyond Internet research into art and artists.

Quality of the curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory.

- Teachers make appropriate use of National Curriculum guidelines to plan lessons and assess progress. The system of grouping the students into different classes according to aptitude helps to ensure the systematic development of artistic skills and knowledge, building on previous learning.
- The wide range of art and artists studied inspires students to make expressive and imaginative paintings and sculpture. However, students do not benefit from meeting and working with practising artists, designers or craftworkers. This limits their understanding of the wide applications of the subject.
- The range of media used is mainly limited to painting, drawing, collage and constructed sculpture. Opportunities to use ceramics have been curtailed due to technical constraints.
- The art department is part of a larger creative arts faculty that is popular with students and stimulates enjoyment and interest in creativity. However, opportunities are missed for interdisciplinary work. The annual Global Rock Challenge (International Performing Arts Production) as well as having a profound effect on the confidence and self-esteem of the students, also enjoys a considerable international reputation but has limited impact on the day to day art curriculum.

- Whilst there is little local distinctiveness to the curriculum, teachers have an increasing understanding of the knowledge, experience and richness of students' ethnic diversity. There are plans to make more use of all students' cultural influences.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management in art and design are good.

- You and senior leaders have a good understanding of the work of the art department and are very supportive of its endeavours.
- Given the wide range of interests and backgrounds from which the students are drawn and the transitory nature of some students' experience in school, the subject leader works very effectively to promote inclusion and accelerate the progress of all students.
- Teachers are good role models and are consistent both in their very good relationships and their expectations of high standards of work and behaviour.
- Teachers plan together and share data and other information to make sure that work matches the students' needs, the National Curriculum requirements and promotes progression in learning.
- Professional development through evaluation and review by senior leaders is good. Departmental self review is also effective in raising standards, though the improvement of teaching through lesson observation needs to be more sharply focussed.
- The curriculum is imaginative and stimulating but its development has been slow to meet the challenge of Technology College status or explore the commercial aspects of contemporary creative activity in the wider world.

The impact of assessment on the progress and creativity of learners

The use of assessment is good.

- Assessment is an integral part of the teaching strategy.
- Learning expectations are linked to the National Curriculum requirements but also based on the progression in skills of particular students. Teachers plan lessons using assessments of different groups. Variations between sexes, ability, learning difficulties and disabilities, ethnic background and language development are all taken into account.
- Teachers do share learning intentions with students, though these are not always specific enough to enable students to assess their own work and progress during the lesson.
- Most students are aware of the National Curriculum level at which they are working and what their 'target' is. Marking is up to date, consistent and informs the student of the level, strengths and areas for improvement. There is often not enough time given at the end of lessons to review progress in relation to planned intentions.

- One to one support also encourages good behaviour, effort, understanding and creativity in all lessons.

Inclusion

Inclusion is good.

- Teachers respond to the widely differing needs of all the students and aim to ensure that all students achieve to the best of their ability. Lesson plans take account of this and careful, targeted support is given.
- Occasionally, different tasks are given to students but more often different aids to learning and resources are provided, along with individual encouragement and advice.
- Teachers also strive to provide good role models from amongst the students. They give rewards and praise to genuine achievement so that students can see that their work is valued.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- ensuring that in all lessons students know how to evaluate their own skills, knowledge and creativity and assess how well they are doing to make further progress
- extending the curriculum to provide a greater range of opportunities, particularly in the areas of information technology, local art and craft
- developing students' skills in analysis and writing about art so that they think and act like artists, craftworkers and designers.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop D&T and Art and Design 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 Ofsted's website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Lyons
Additional Inspector