

09 July 2009

Mr M Watson  
Headteacher  
Lavington School  
The Spring  
Market Lavington  
Devizes  
Wiltshire  
SN10 4EB

Dear Mr Watson

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Design and Technology and  
Business Education

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during our visit on 9-10 June 2009 to look at work in Design and Technology (D&T) and Business Education.

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 students' work and observation of work in lessons.

### Design and Technology

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

### Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are good

- Many students start at the school with average skills and capability in D&T. They make good progress and achieve well. D&T GCSE results are above the national average with 70.5% of students gaining higher grades in 2008 compared with 60% nationally. School predictions for 2009 show a trend of continuing improvement. Girls and boys achieve equally well as do students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
- Students' personal development is very good and they value the opportunities provided to develop individual projects. They particularly

enjoy innovating and creating original designs, for example Year 11 resistant materials projects range widely from well designed and made furniture to metal sculptures of animals.

### Quality of teaching and learning of D&T

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

- D&T teaching commands the respect of students who work closely with staff to develop their design work. Lesson and coursework management are good. Lesson plans are detailed and thorough. Key Stage 3 resources are well chosen and nearly all GCSE project work is funded by students who are encouraged to select and buy their own materials in order to develop research skills and awareness of cost.
- Teachers' expectations of students are high when they are designing and making. This results in products that are well designed and made with precision. Assessment procedures focus well on the evaluation of D&T capability. Students are provided with good individual guidance and help during practical work and they know how well they are doing throughout their time at the school.

### Quality of the D&T curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- The department provides a broad of design and make activities which help students gain experience of a good range of materials. Curriculum planning is good and the joint teaching of design with art is a feature. Students experience a variety of appropriate programmes at Key Stage 3. The curriculum at Key Stage 4 is effectively constructed to meet GCSE course requirements.
- The school is rightly planning to integrate computer aided design and manufacturing skills and understanding of systems and control more effectively into project work. The promotion of creativity and enjoyment of learning are exemplified in high quality work. Students thoroughly enjoy producing original design ideas and solutions.

### Leadership and management of D&T

Leadership and management of the subject are good.

- The school evaluation of D&T work is accurate and well evidenced. The work of leaders and managers is sharply focussed on raising achievement and supporting learning. Subject and classroom leadership are strong and effective. Senior leaders ensure the capacity to improve D&T continues to develop. Achievement and learning are central to the work of a very effective team which shares a well considered vision for D&T.

The extent to which the school promotes awareness and relevance of D&T to pupils and parents and carers

Students and parents are very supportive of D&T work. One parent wrote in a student's planner how fantastic it was to see such a well designed and made piece of jewellery. Communication with parents is good and attendance at exhibitions of students' work is high.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- extending the use of electronics, systems and control work.

### Business Education

As the school does not provide examination courses in business, the visit focussed on the development of economic and business understanding and financial capability for all students at Key Stage 4 and the introduction of the new programme of study for economic well-being and financial capability at Key Stage 3.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included: interviews with staff and learners, scrutiny of relevant documentation and observation of lessons.

The overall effectiveness of business education, including support to develop students' economic well being was judged to be good with good capacity to improve.

### Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in business education are good.

- Students are developing a good grounding in economic and business concepts and personal financial understanding.
- Students have very positive attitudes to lessons and other activities aimed at developing their economic well-being. Behaviour in the lessons observed was good and students were fully engaged in the tasks they were set.
- Students consistently demonstrated a good level of attainment and independent learning skills in the lessons observed.

### Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning in business education is good.

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and a good rapport with their students.

- Teachers provided a good range of learning activities in the lessons observed, successfully engaging students and maintaining their interest through the setting of relevant and stimulating tasks.
- In the lessons observed, teachers checked carefully students' understanding of key ideas and made effective use of questioning to extend their learning.

## Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the business education curriculum is good.

- There are good opportunities for students to develop their economic and business understanding and financial capability, including a programme of well-organised enterprise activities that are highly valued by students
- Work experience is particularly well-organised. Students are thoroughly prepared for their work experience and value both the opportunity to find their own placements and the skills they develop as a result of doing so. Appropriate arrangements are in place for students to evaluate what they have learned from their placements.

## Leadership and management

Leadership and management of business education are good.

- Thorough auditing of the curriculum is giving the school a comprehensive overview of the current provision for economic well-being and financial capability and where it is taught.
- Leaders and managers have a clear understanding of how this provision may be further improved. Well-conceived plans are in place to strengthen the co-ordination of the existing provision and further develop financial capability in personal, social and health education (PSHE). There is a strong culture of continuous improvement.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- maintaining the focus on strengthening the co-ordination of the provision for economic well-being and financial capability for all students
- fully implementing plans to further embed personal financial education in the PSHE scheme of work.

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

As explained in the 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

Paul Hancock  
Russell Jordan  
Her Majesty's Inspectors