

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

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



7 October 2009

Mr N Burgoyne
Headteacher
Kesgrave High School
Main Road
Kesgrave
Suffolk
IP5 2PB

Dear Mr Burgoyne

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Design and technology

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during the visit by Paul Scott HMI and myself, on 22 and 23 September 2009, to look at work in Design and Technology (D&T).

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the subject, the visit had a particular focus on how the school promotes awareness and relevance of D&T to students and their parents, and the extent to which their views contribute to the school's evaluation of 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 students' work and observation of seven lessons.

The overall effectiveness of D&T is satisfactory.

Achievement in D&T

Students' achievement is satisfactory overall.

- Most students' attainment on entry to the school is above average. Students undertake a broad range of designing and making activities in Year 7 to 9 and develop confidence in using tools and materials but their learning is insufficiently planned by teachers to promote satisfactory progress.

- Students' attainment in Key Stage 4 examinations improved in 2008 from a low base in 2007. Attainment in 2009 examinations showed further improvement. At the post-16 level, above average standards have been maintained and there has been an increase in students' interest and take-up of courses. Systems to analyse the progress of different student groups are in place in the school but are not fully utilised in D&T.
- Students make satisfactory progress in lessons and in their personal development. Students enjoy the opportunity to use their own ideas and acquire practical skills when using materials. Relationships with staff are good and sixth formers work independently and draw effectively on their earlier work. Many sixth form students take up engineering and technological courses at university.

Quality of teaching of D&T

Teaching and learning are satisfactory.

- Lessons are satisfactory, with some good features in the sixth form.
- Teachers' subject knowledge and class management are good. Staff readily draw upon their own industrial experience in their teaching and their expertise and advice are sought by students to help them realise their ideas.
- Teaching in the sixth form is lively and interesting. Students learn well from each other when teachers plan opportunities for discussion groups and feedback within the class. However, this best practice is not shared sufficiently. A narrow range of teaching and learning strategies is employed in some lessons and teachers' planning does not build sufficiently upon students' prior knowledge to ensure that they make quick progress.
- Older students said that regular one-to-one reviews of their performance and personal feedback are useful in helping them to understand how to improve. Assessment criteria are less clearly defined at Key Stage 3 and used inconsistently across the teaching team.

Quality of the curriculum in D&T

The quality of the D&T curriculum is satisfactory

- The wide range of courses and qualifications at Key Stage 4 and post 16 is adequately matched to students' needs and interests. Most students are pleased with their courses and access to resources is well planned. Technological rigour and students' application of scientific principles are well demonstrated in electronic products coursework.
- The scheme of work was incomplete at the time of the visit. Planning is inconsistent and lacks coherence at Key Stage 3. Whilst teaching plans demonstrate what students will do, some do not focus sufficiently on what they will learn. Consequently they are not as helpful to teachers as they might be in promoting students' progress.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in D&T

Leadership and management in D&T are satisfactory.

- The improvements in attainment, teaching and resources reflect the challenge and support for D&T provided by yourself, the governors and the senior managers. Teachers' professional development has had a positive impact on students' examination performance and the management of coursework. The school is aware of the need to monitor and evaluate students' progress more rigorously, particularly at Key Stage 3.
- The subject leader has a clear vision for D&T. Self-evaluation is developing well and school and subject plans demonstrate high expectations for improvement.

The school satisfactorily promotes awareness and relevance of D&T to students and parents

- Students, particularly in the sixth form, see the relevance of D&T to general life skills and careers. They want to make products that are personally useful to them and are critical of the lack of relevance of some of their work at Key Stage 3. The vision for D&T is not shared with students or parents.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- ensuring the Key Stage 3 curriculum is planned coherently, so that teaching builds securely on students' earlier learning and progress
- sharing best practice consistently, to expand the range of teaching strategies and to involve students more actively in lessons.

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

Gina White
Her Majesty's Inspector