

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



15 February 2010

Mr R Johnston
Acting Headteacher
Hanley Castle High School
Church End
Hanley Castle
Worcester
WR8 0BL

Dear Mr Johnston

Ofsted 2009-10 subject survey inspection programme: design and technology (D&T)

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and students, during my visit on 28 and 29 January 2010 to look at work in 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.

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

The overall effectiveness of D&T is good.

Achievement in D&T

Students' achievement in D&T is good.

- Trends of above average attainment at GCSE and post-16 are well established in D&T. In lessons, students make at least satisfactory progress at Key Stage 3 and good and outstanding progress during Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form.
- Students enjoy the opportunity to exercise choice and make design decisions when undertaking projects that meet their interests. Students take pride in learning making skills and in their accomplishments in food

technology. They are confident of and competent at cooking healthy meals by the end of Key Stage 3. They understand the importance of health and safety, use machines safely and wear appropriate personal protective equipment. Their enjoyment is well demonstrated in the very high proportion of students who continue to study D&T at Key Stage 4.

- Students' awareness of the moral and social responsibilities of designers and technologists is satisfactory, but opportunities for most students to discuss and debate the current issues and the impact of design and technology in society are limited.

Quality of teaching of D&T

The quality of teaching is good.

- Teachers' expertise and their professional practice as designers and makers are highly respected by sixth-form students. This is demonstrated very well in the depth of knowledge and effective assessment and guidance given, particularly in Key Stage 4 and sixth-form lessons.
- Accommodation and resources are excellent and are used expertly by teachers to support teaching. They play a key role in students' decisions to continue to study the subject. The best lessons are characterised by well-structured planning, particularly in food, fashion and textiles lessons. The use of booklets, writing frames and charts and the examples of other students' work provide a supportive framework to aid understanding and support good progress for all groups of learners. This good practice is not shared sufficiently across the department and generally students' work shows limited use of learning strategies to support them in becoming more independent learners.

Quality of the curriculum in D&T

The quality of the curriculum in D&T is good.

- The extensive extra-curricular provision, in the form of Masterchef competitions, 'cook off' competitions and the textiles club, adds to the challenge and enjoyment of D&T, is a feature of the school, and is highly valued by students and their families.
- An expansion in the range of Key Stage 4 and sixth-form courses is successfully promoting choice and meeting students' interests and diverse needs. The Key Stage 3 curriculum does not fully meet the requirements for students to study electronics, systems and control.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in D&T

Leadership and management in D&T are good.

- Senior leadership support for D&T is demonstrated well in the well-equipped department, good accommodation and attention given to health and safety and particularly class sizes.

- Management of the subject is effective in ensuring health and safety are monitored closely, risks are assessed and training takes place. Systems of self-evaluation are firmly embedded and enable the school to recognise where changes to practice are required to further raise standards. Continuing professional development is used well to inform course development but has not ensured staff are trained to confidently teach all aspects of electronics, systems and control.

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

Awareness and relevance of D&T to students and parents are good.

- The general principles of the school's vision for D&T are shared. Parents and carers are supportive of D&T and aware of the contribution it makes to promote their children's readiness for life and work. They see the benefits D&T has on their children's enjoyment of school. Students also see relevance in what they do and their views are formally collected and inform self-evaluation.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- improving the quality of teaching and learning by sharing the excellent practice and teaching strategies more coherently across the department
- ensuring all students receive their entitlement to study electronics, systems and control and develop students' awareness of the social and moral decisions that designers and engineers make.

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

As I explained previously, 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