

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

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



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Mr C Soulsby
Headteacher
Foxwood School
Seabrook Road
Hythe
Kent
CT21 5QJ

Dear Mr Soulsby

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 pupils, during my visit with my colleague, David Knighton HMI, on 4 March 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 pupils 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 pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of two lessons.

The overall effectiveness of D&T is outstanding.

Achievement in D&T

Pupils' achievement in D&T is outstanding.

- Pupils make good progress from their starting points. They have clear targets and acquire skills progressively throughout the school to manipulate materials and switches and learn how to combine ingredients to make tasty food.
- Pupils' progress in lessons is outstanding. Pupils like their current work and are developing competence in combining materials. They have

opportunities to make choices and increasingly more able pupils exercise decision-making and take responsibility as they move through the school. Younger pupils in Key Stage 1 concentrated for lengthy periods, followed instructions to weave paper baskets and worked effectively with support to develop accuracy in cutting skills.

- D&T makes an excellent contribution to pupils' personal development. For many pupils, D&T plays a key role in their acquisition of life skills and physical development. For example, they learn about and use control systems to help them to communicate and to help their movement. They enjoy their learning and readily participate in D&T activities and tasks. The high levels of support and guidance they receive from staff help pupils to follow health, safety and hygiene rules effectively.

Quality of teaching of D&T

The quality of teaching in D&T is outstanding.

- Teachers' expert knowledge of each pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities, their knowledge of D&T and their understanding of how to best motivate and challenge each pupil are combined to excellent effect. Teachers have high expectations and use questioning effectively, for example to check pupils understand the links between tools, equipment and purpose. Activities and focused tasks are planned well and lessons are judiciously managed between teachers and support staff who know when to reinforce previous learning and when to push ahead with the next step. They are sensitive to the mood of pupils, and when attention starts to flag they introduce another task to develop a specific skill in a different way and keep their interest and engagement high.
- A wide range of carefully selected resources, computer programmes and simple products, such as colour-changing kettles and guided scissors, is selected well to meet the needs of pupils. Every opportunity is taken to engage each pupil in experiencing materials. For example, pupils in Years 8 and 9 are encouraged to smell different ingredients when making cheese and courgette muffins.
- Assessment and recording meet pupils' needs. Regular communication with parents, through photographs and written comments, enables them to see what skills and experiences their children have had and how to support and reinforce learning.

Quality of the curriculum in D&T

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

- The curriculum is inventive and organised well with a clear emphasis on making, finding out how everyday products function and experiencing new tastes. It meets pupils' needs and contributes very well to support their wider development and preparation for independent living skills.
- Memorable activities, designed to interest and engage pupils as they develop throughout the school, link well with other aspects of the

curriculum. For example, the oldest pupils participate in a cooking rota as part of a residential activity. The D&T curriculum makes a very good contribution to cross-curricular work and well-designed activities enable pupils to achieve relevant qualifications.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in D&T

Leadership and management in D&T are outstanding.

- D&T is led exceptionally well by an experienced and knowledgeable subject leader. The subject is resourced well and there is a strong sense of purpose among the staff. Systematic approaches to monitoring small steps in pupils' progress are securely in place. Effective analysis of data and evaluation of pupils' learning and progress drive self-review. Planning draws upon this securely to set a clear agenda for improvement.

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

Awareness and relevance of D&T to pupils and parents are outstanding.

- Designing and making are useful and relevant to pupils' lives. Pupils enjoy the activities. Staff and parents share a common understanding of the contribution D&T makes in the development of pupils' skills for life and independence. Communication about pupils' making and skill development is very good and valued highly by parents.

No areas for improvement were identified during this visit that the school's leaders have not already identified and planned for.

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