

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

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



22 March 2010

Mrs P Dixon
Headteacher
Prenton High School for Girls
Hesketh Avenue
Rock Ferry
Birkenhead
CH42 6RR

Dear Mrs Dixon

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

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 8 and 9 March 2010 to look at work in D&T.

As outlined in the 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 and students, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of students' work and observation of lessons.

The overall effectiveness of D&T is good.

Achievement in D&T

Students' achievement in D&T is good.

- When they start at the school, many girls' D&T skills and capability are below those normally found. They make good progress and attainment is average and above in projects, such as designing and making clocks in Year 9. The GCSE results of about one in five girls who take D&T courses are outstanding. In product design courses, specialising in catering and graphics, 91% gained A* to C grades. Girls with special educational needs and/or disabilities make equally good progress, as do all the other groups

of students. D&T is making a strong contribution to personal development as a result of the independent learning skills acquired through project work.

Quality of teaching of D&T

The quality of teaching is good.

- Teachers' subject knowledge is good and the school extends it through links with city learning centres to provide teachers and students with experience of computer-aided design and manufacture. D&T teaching ensures all girls, including the above average proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve as well as they can. Work in D&T has a strong focus on developing individual ideas and making good-quality products. The department has rightly made the more effective monitoring of students' progress at Key Stage 3 a priority for development.

Quality of the curriculum in D&T

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

- Girls' needs and interests are met well as a result of effective planning and delivery at Key Stage 3. Recent national initiatives, such as 'License to Cook' in Year 7, are having a positive impact and encouraging more practical work. The girls experience a range of materials, components and equipment which are matched well to activities. Resources are used well to ensure products are made with thought and precision. The school has made further broadening of the curriculum a priority, for example through introducing more systems and control work.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in D&T

Leadership and management in D&T are good.

- Self-evaluation is rigorous in identifying the major strengths and areas for development. Subject performance is monitored closely by senior leaders. The vision for D&T is shared with staff, who work closely as a team to ensure the subject continues to flourish and maintain the good capacity to improve.

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.

Parents are involved in after-school activities such as cooking and jewellery classes. Communication is good and the vision for the subject is shared with parents, girls and staff, for example through displays of work. Students consider D&T as relevant to their career choices and are well informed about present and future projects.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- increasing the effectiveness of monitoring at Key Stage 3
- extending the curriculum to include a broader range of activities such as system and control work.

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

Paul Hancock
Her Majesty's Inspector