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Mr J Szemalikowski
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Szemalikowski

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 2 and 3 February 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 and students, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of students' work and observation of 10 lessons.

The overall effectiveness of D&T is good.

Achievement in D&T

Students' achievement in D&T is satisfactory.

- There is a strongly improving trend in standards. Attainment is below average by the end of Key Stage 4 and is broadly average in the sixth form. Students engage in the range of opportunities provided and with increased success are motivated and encouraged to develop their D&T thinking.
- Prior attainment on entry to the school is low and varies a great deal from year group to year group. Despite this, students make good progress

overall and many make outstanding progress. This is because students have positive attitudes towards learning, teachers know them well and use targets systematically to monitor their progress.

Quality of teaching of D&T

The quality of teaching in D&T is good.

- Much of the teaching demonstrates enthusiasm and is planned well by staff with good subject knowledge and classroom management skills. Teachers provide effective individual support. Students appreciate this and feel there is always someone they can get help from, especially for coursework.
- Students usually know their 'Hampstead Challenge' targets and are motivated by them to achieve well. They are developing more independent approaches, particularly in the sixth form, but activities are too teacher-directed. Students' progress is slower in lessons where they are not sufficiently challenged and activities do not always take prior learning into account.
- There is a friendly and work orientated atmosphere in the teaching rooms, with teachers and students often sharing the passion for learning and enjoying the lessons cooperatively. A wide range of appropriate resources is available for students. This includes outstanding catering facilities. Displays celebrate students' successes and promote learning, although the school recognises that teaching spaces could, with a little more attention to detail, be more productive and inviting to students.

Quality of the curriculum in D&T

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

- The range of courses and qualification in all key stages are matched well to students' needs. This is evident in the progress and interest students show. The school is aware that it needs to continue to develop the curriculum further to keep pace with improving attainment and higher aspirations of students and parents. Opportunities for developing wider choice and personal creativity for individuals are beginning and require further expansion for all students.
- Changes to the curriculum structure promote greater continuity, enable teachers to get to know students well throughout the year and ensure good progress is made in understanding and applying design principles. They are also successful in developing students' knowledge and skills with processes associated with specific materials.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in D&T

Leadership and management in D&T are good.

- The head of department, senior leaders and governors demonstrate a clear commitment to developing high-quality experiences for students in

D&T. The increasing success of the department, the high quality new facilities in catering and the support for wider technology activities across the school are clear evidence of this.

- A clear vision is being implemented sensitively, rigorously and successfully. The school is clear about strengths and areas for development and is improving the quality of teaching still further.

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 school engages in a wide range of activities to promote community cohesion, which is highly effective. Technology-based activities have been used as a focus for many of these activities with the effect of bringing the community together and developing a higher level of understanding of what D&T is about and how it can influence our lives.
- Students and parents have worked together on D&T projects and this is developing a shared understanding of the relevance of the subject, including the direct application to careers and to general life skills.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- raising attainment by ensuring teaching consistently challenges students of all abilities effectively and enables students to work more independently
- developing the curriculum to ensure all students have greater opportunities to develop more creative and individual solutions.

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 Scott
Her Majesty's Inspector