

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

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



9 March 2010

Mrs S Trigger
Headteacher
Bitterne Park School
Copsewood Road
Bitterne Park
Southampton
SO18 1BU

Dear Mrs Trigger

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 19 and 20 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 and students, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of students' work and observation of seven lessons.

The overall effectiveness of D&T is good.

Achievement in D&T

Students' achievement in D&T is good.

- Attainment is above average with an improving trend. The school has a clear focus on raising achievement and developing students' confidence in the application of D&T skills. Attainment on entry to the school is slightly below average. By the end of Key Stage 3 standards are broadly average.
- Staff encourage and support students to reach increasingly challenging targets and standards that are above average by Year 11.

- Students enjoy the hands-on active learning that they are able to engage in during D&T activities. Relationships in lessons are productive and friendly. This enthusiasm, commitment, and trust in teaching staff assists in securing the good progress made. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported very well in classrooms with a strongly inclusive ethos and make similar progress to their peers.

Quality of teaching of D&T

The quality of teaching in D&T is good.

- The teaching team has a wide range of skills and good subject knowledge that contributes well to the development of the department and the outcomes for students. Good behaviour, clear procedures and expectations in classrooms mean that lessons have a positive learning atmosphere.
- Teachers' planning is thorough and opportunities to encourage students to assess their own work used well. In the best lessons, learning opportunities are matched well to the abilities of individual students. However, some more able students are not always sufficiently challenged.
- Good monitoring systems inform teachers' planning. Students know their targets and can self-assess their work and that of others. However, the precision with which they use highly defined criteria is not embedded sufficiently in practice to ensure that all students understand the next stages of learning to work independently.

Quality of the curriculum in D&T

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

- Students' needs are adequately matched to the wide range of courses and qualifications provided at Key Stage 4. Students feel they received good guidance and support on the course, particularly for the completion of coursework.
- The curriculum is developing well as the art and design and technology faculty comes together in recent restructuring. The school recognises that there is still work to do to ensure that students have more opportunities to develop more creative and diverse design work. Extensive and well founded plans are in place to develop a wider range of qualifications suited to students' learning needs and interests.
- The STEM club offers students a range of fantastic opportunities to get involved in further projects with science, mathematics and technology. The school has established very quickly a group of students who can talk with authority and enthusiasm about the work they have done.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in D&T

Leadership and management in D&T are outstanding.

- Leaders have transformed D&T in a short period of time and considerable improvements in provision and students' outcomes are evident. Clear

evaluation and decisive action have led to good and improving teaching. The successful implementation of a long-term strategic plan is ensuring that D&T is moving forward with increasing pace.

- Governors, senior leaders and members of the department are all committed to, and clear about, the further development of D&T. The restructuring and merging of art, design and technology are enabling analytical practitioners to build learning opportunities appropriate for the future.

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 outstanding.

- The school is very active and successful in promoting D&T and what it can offer all students. Students are clear about the relevance of D&T to careers as well as to ways that skills can be applied in other subjects. Many cross-curricular activities and opportunities develop D&T awareness.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- developing the curriculum to strengthen further the opportunities for creativity, a diverse range of work and independent learning
- ensuring that teaching allows students of all abilities to make even greater progress through more challenging activities.

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