

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

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



5 October 2010

Mr M Fitzgerald
Headteacher
Parrenthorn High School
Heywood Road
Prestwich
Manchester
M25 2GR

Dear Mr Fitzgerald

Ofsted 2010–11 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 22 and 23 September 2010 to look at work in 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 without their consent.

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 outstanding.

Achievement in D&T

Students' achievement in D&T is good.

- The starting points of many students in D&T are similar to those normally found. Achievement is good and the number gaining GCSE A* to C grades in 2010 is above average. Girls achieve more highly than boys and their results are well above average. The best performing subjects are product design, textiles and graphics. Students make good and sometimes exceptional progress in food and resistant materials, many from lower starting points. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the gifted and talented make equally good progress. Results have improved significantly in the last year.
- Technology College status has improved delivery and specialist targets have been exceeded. Students quickly learn to take responsibility when

developing their design thinking. They are mature and enthusiastic about the subject and their involvement in D&T project work. The department is rightly looking to help students acquire D&T capability and independent learning skills at an earlier age to further raise achievement.

Quality of teaching of D&T

The quality of teaching is good.

- The school's evaluation of the quality of teaching in D&T as good, with a significant proportion which is outstanding, is accurate. Much of the learning is based on project outcomes which challenge students to think through their own design work and make well-crafted prototypes. The teaching meets the needs and abilities of students well and lessons are managed appropriately to encourage learning at a good pace. Work in D&T is assessed accurately and the information is used well to drive individual learning. Baseline assessments are carried out when students start in Year 7 and progress is monitored regularly. Students know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve in D&T.

Quality of the curriculum in D&T

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

- The full range of students' needs and interests is met by a broad and balanced curriculum that provides students with their full entitlement to D&T activities. It is tailored very successfully to meet individual needs, for example by providing a different timetable for some Year 11 students who need support with their project work. Programmes are matched very well to interests, often using computers to help when designing, and vocational settings and 'fairtrade' provide a context for project work. Excellent links with local employers and the community enrich students' learning and engagement in D&T.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in D&T

Leadership and management in D&T are outstanding.

- Leaders and managers at all levels have successfully established a clear vision for D&T and the subject is highly valued. Staff work closely as a team and morale is very high. Monitoring and self-evaluation are rigorous and plans for future improvements are sharply focused. For example, leaders and managers wish to see even more outstanding teaching and they are taking the right steps to improve the quality further.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- raising achievement even more by helping students to acquire D&T capability and independent learning skills at an earlier age
- further increasing the proportion of outstanding teaching and learning.

I hope that 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 published on the Ofsted website. It may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection. Except in the case of academies, a copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

Paul Hancock
Her Majesty's Inspector