Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404040
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Ofsted
raising standards
improving lives

11 November 2008

Mrs E Lutzeier
Headteacher
All Hallows Catholic School
Weybourne Road
Farnham
Surrey
GU9 9HF

Dear Mrs Lutzeier

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Design and Technology

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff and students, during my visit on 5-6 November 2008 to look at work in Design and Technology (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. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included interviews with staff and learners, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of students' work and observation of six lessons.

The overall effectiveness of D&T was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards overall are good.

- Standards by the end of Key Stages 3 and 4 are above average and a consistent improving trend is well established in all D&T courses.
- From their starting points in Year 7 students extend their knowledge in using a range of materials safely and develop skills in using modern manufacturing processes to make high quality products. By the end of Key Stage 4 most students can design and make products linked to their own interests and use complex computer aided design and manufacture (CAD and CAM) confidently and competently. Some students progress further in extending their skills to greater depth and with increasing precision to design and make products of professional

quality. General awareness amongst students of how technology affects society and their own lives is less firmly developed.
- The relatively small numbers of students completing Advanced level courses meet the expectations the school has of them and a significant minority achieve exceptionally well.
- The subject makes a positive contribution to students' personal development. Students' behaviour and attitudes to D&T are good. They work together safely and welcome opportunities to participate in competitions and to solve problems. They know how to cook and make family meals and understand the importance of healthy eating.

Quality of teaching and learning of D&T

The quality of teaching and learning overall is good.

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and skills, are well supported by technical staff, and lessons are exceptionally well organised. Teachers question effectively in lessons to check what students know and understand at the beginning of new modules of work. Teachers' use of subject vocabulary and accurate explanations are strengths of the teaching. Students' learning needs are mostly well met with the exception of undemanding tasks in some lessons which failed to challenge the most able.
- Specialist technology status has been used effectively to provide good resources for computers and together with equipment for CAD and CAM they enable students to quickly research, design and make products to a high technical level. Most students say they are proud of what they make and feel a real sense of accomplishment in D&T.
- Assessment is satisfactory. Most students know their targets and strongly value personal feedback and discussion with teachers about their work. Students say this is an essential element in helping them to improve. However, teachers' practice in this respect is inconsistent across the teaching team and all students currently do not benefit from such good practice in every Key Stage 4 course.

Quality of the D&T curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory.

- Changes introduced to the curriculum for Advanced level students provide challenging opportunities to enable them to develop their understanding of the purpose of product design and the social and moral responsibilities of designers.
- A wide range of GCSE courses provided at Key Stage 4 meet students' expectations. Opportunities to use new CAD/CAM resources are well integrated throughout the schemes of work for Years 7 to 13. Staff are aware that some of the traditional projects with their over emphasis on written work require updating or replacement to better reflect the

purpose of D&T and to utilise students' emerging scientific and mathematical understanding. Such a development would better enable the school to meet the challenge of being a technology college at the leading edge of subject development.
- The scheme of work planned for Year 7 does not reflect sufficiently the new requirements at Key Stage 3. Planning for this year group does not focus explicitly upon developing the key concepts and key processes of the subject. Within the current programme of work opportunities to develop students' cultural understanding and their ability to solve technical problems are particularly under-represented.
- Extra curricular activities and enrichment of the curriculum through participation in competitions and visits are highly valued by students and help the subject to come alive. Insufficient opportunities to work with professional designers and makers in all key stages currently limit students' understanding of the relevance of the subject to improving local, national and global communities.

Leadership and management of D&T

Leadership and management of the subject are good.

- Senior leaders provide effective support for the subject; they ensure good co-ordination and leadership of D&T and make sure that students' access to high quality resources and accommodation keeps pace with technological advancements.
- The subject is very well led. Systems and processes are firmly embedded and support good day to day organisation. Training and support is effective enabling staff to extend their subject knowledge and enable more flexible deployment. Health and safety practice is secure.
- Self-evaluation is good and plans are well focussed upon raising standards. However a wider vision for a technologically advanced education is not sufficiently shared to precisely guide the development of the subject.
- The support of technicians is outstanding and highly valued by students in Years 10 to 13 who draw upon their very good technical knowledge to enable them to realise their ideas to make creative and complex products. Technicians contribute exceptionally well to the departments work enabling new resources to be used effectively.

The extent to which inequality and stereotyping are tackled in D&T

- School data shows the gap between boys' and girls' attainment has closed at Key Stage 3 but remains wide between courses at Key Stage 4.
- The school is aware that almost all boys choose to end their study of textiles at the end of Key Stage 3. Actions have yet to investigate why this is so or lead to changes to the curriculum.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- updating and promoting widely a shared vision for D&T in a leading edge technology college
- evaluating the curriculum regularly to meet the changing needs of students and national requirements
- ensuring all students have opportunities to work with designers and makers and to apply their scientific understanding with D&T knowledge and skills to solve problem in complex contexts.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop D&T in the school.

As explained in the previous letter, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be published on Ofsted's website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Gina White
Her Majesty's Inspector
Subject Adviser for Design and Technology