

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

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



29 March 2012

Miss E Stanley
Headteacher
Penn Fields School
Birches Barn Road
Penn Fields
Wolverhampton
WV3 7BJ

Dear Miss Stanley

Ofsted 2011–12 subject survey inspection programme: design and technology (D&T)

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 19 March 2012 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 pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of three lessons.

The overall effectiveness of D&T is satisfactory.

Achievement in D&T

Achievement in D&T is satisfactory.

- Attainment at the beginning of Key Stage 1 is very low, but varies from pupil to pupil. The school establishes a clear baseline for every pupil. By the end of Key Stage 4, all pupils make at least satisfactory progress and a few pupils make good and outstanding progress and achieve grade C at GCSE.
- All pupils develop a capability in making in a range of materials. Pupils' designing capabilities are more limited.

Quality of teaching in D&T

The quality of teaching in D&T is satisfactory.

- Relationships between staff and pupils are strong. Pupils said they enjoy making products because they can use their imagination. Pupils work well together to solve problems and think about ideas cooperatively. However, opportunities are missed to encourage pupils to explain their ideas and thinking, particularly when questioned.
- Pupils in the upper school are encouraged to measure with accuracy. Opportunities are missed to encourage all pupils in lower school to measure accurately. A lack of computer-aided designing and manufacture and few opportunities to use modern and smart materials limits pupils' experience in making products using modern manufacturing processes.

Quality of the curriculum in D&T

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

- The curriculum offers rich opportunities for all pupils to make a range of products and develops their life skills well. The curriculum in the lower school follows the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's planning and has been adapted to give a thematic approach to take account of the limited resources for cooking. The limited provision has an impact at Key Stages 3 and 4 as neither of the cookers are adapted for wheelchair users or those pupils of restricted growth. Textile work is also very limited in the upper school.
- The curriculum in Key Stages 3 and 4 does not promote the development of progression in designing capabilities and this limits pupils' understanding of designing and making.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in D&T

The effectiveness of leadership and management in D&T is satisfactory.

- The school makes effective use of data to track and monitor pupils' work in D&T. The coordinator for D&T is very supportive and helpful to colleagues in planning their activities and ensuring that there is a similar approach to D&T throughout the school.
- Health and safety procedures meet all statutory requirements. Pupils understood them well and this allows them to work independently.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring that the curriculum enables pupils to develop their design capabilities so that they understand the how products are designed and made
- providing opportunities for pupils to use modern manufacturing techniques used in computer-aided design and manufacture and smart and modern materials.

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

As 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. A copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

Michelle Parker
Her Majesty's Inspector