

**Meeting technological challenges?**  
**Ofsted subject report for Design and Technology in schools 2007-2010**  
**March 2011**  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

The National Association of Advisers and Inspectors in Design and Technology (NAAIDT) welcomes the recent publication 'Meeting technological challenges?' Design and Technology in schools 2007-2010 which provides clear recommendations for developing the subject in the future.

In this period of educational change the report has found that a *'considerable challenge facing schools is the modernisation of the D&T curriculum so that it keeps pace with technological developments'*.

It is exciting to read of the examples of good practice which clearly illustrate that good D&T is, and does happen in our schools and should be celebrated. However the *'variation between the best and the weakest provision was unacceptably wide'*.

The report clearly highlights areas for development to ensure quality Design and Technology for all pupils.

Design and Technology is a valued subject in schools.

Pupils *'enjoy designing and making, solving problems and seeing their ideas take shape'*.

Design and Technology has *'a positive impact on pupils thinking, problem solving, creative skills, personal development'*.

It acknowledges *'the contribution it made to developing pupils' general awareness of the world of work and preparation for the future'*.

The report found that (in the schools visited) children's experiences of designing and making in the Early years Foundation stage were encouraging with children making progress and developing and using their technological expertise.

Features of a good Primary curriculum included good planning, challenging activities, linking with external partners, high levels of knowledge, understanding and technical skills. Assessment is being used more effectively and accurately to monitor pupil's achievement but not yet to monitor pupils' progress.

In some Secondary schools, however, programmes of learning were found to be out-dated and there is an urgent need to be proactive in encouraging schools to invest in making schemes of work relevant to the needs of their pupils in the 21st century. Whilst D&T is still a popular subject choice at Key Stage 4 numbers being entered for examinations are dropping. Boys' attainment and the widening gender achievement gap in our subject continue to be a big concern.

The clear set of recommendations presented in the report include issues related to:

- Ensuring that all pupils have a minimum entitlement to learn about innovation, new materials, electronics, and systems and control and combine their

scientific and technical understanding to design and make practical products and systems

- Updating curriculum topics making them more relevant to pupils' needs and interests as well as making the most of the technological advances available
- Providing all pupils with challenge building on their prior experiences and using assessment of pupil progress to move them forward in their learning
- The need to encourage children to 'think as designers'
- Developing a practical understanding of new resources including new materials and technological equipment and processes
- Continuity and transition between phases, especially Primary through to Secondary
- The importance of providing an inspiring and challenging Key Stage 3 as a foundation for Key Stage 4
- Ensuring that there is access to high quality training

Some schools have found:

- access to information about high quality training difficult
- teachers find it difficult to be released from schools to attend training sessions and
- funding for both training and up to date resources is restricted

It is important to read the report in full [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk) as there is much to be learnt from it and this is only a brief summary.

Gina White HMI will be at The 2011 NAAIDT conference at Winchester on May 19<sup>th</sup> to present and discuss the findings of the report.

NAAIDT will now look to explore innovative and manageable ways of continuing to support all colleagues that are involved with developing and maintaining good quality Design and Technology in our schools and to offer practical and manageable advice and support.

Pam Bolton  
NAAIDT President elect 2011  
[www.naaidt.org.uk](http://www.naaidt.org.uk)