DIXONS CITY ACADEMY
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Principal: Shirley Watson

The Design Technology Department

The department has extremely well-equipped teaching areas and some of the best facilities in the country. Whilst some of the rooms do have a specialist materials bias, others are multi-material and may change emphasis from year to year. Staff often teach in a number of areas and move between rooms and the ability to be flexible is a prerequisite. The department has 9 teaching areas, 5 teaching staff and 2 technicians. The department benefits from the expertise and research and development of ICSAT who work out of Dixons City supporting DT in an international capacity.

Over a number of years, the DT Department at Dixons has earned a nationwide profile for its work. Department staff have been heavily involved in the establishment of AQA's GCSE Product Design Specification where the emphasis is on a multi-material approach to designing and making. This approach is adopted throughout Key Stages 3 & 4. All students take DT throughout Year 7 and 8 and there is a high uptake at options as the subject is fully supported in the blocks (110 in each year group from 9-11). Current year 11 are completing GCSE Product Design with groups specialising in material areas such as 3D/Resistant Materials and textiles. Year 9 and 10 are working towards the new AQA GCSE Design & Technology.

Results at GCSE and A level are consistently significantly above national performance. As such, the department has the respect of the wider school community as well as a local and national reputation for excellence. Although a good deal of support is provided, with banks of existing projects in place, individual teachers are encouraged to be innovative and develop new schemes of work to add to the project bank.

At Post-16 AQA Product Design is taught to 'A' Level. Students work through a '3D' materials material pathways through the course. The department would like to broaden the range of courses on offer, particularly at Post-16.

CAD/CAM is a major resource within the department and we try to emulate industrial and commercial practices whenever possible. Our facilities include: 3 laser cutters, 1 lathe, 8 three axis millers/engravers, 1 four axis router, 1 large bed router, 2 3D printers, 2 sublimation printing units, industrial embroidery machine, 2 domestic embroidery machines, 1 Versacam printer/sign maker, 1 Roland plotter/cutter and 2 Stika machines. There are over 80 computers within the department.

Going forward, we are embracing the challenges presented by the new curriculum and we see the current curriculum review as an ideal opportunity to re-invigorate the current KS3 offering and enhance our offering.