



Groby Community College Governor Visit Record

Name of Governor	Tracey Kinsley
Date and Time of visit	8th May 2013
Purpose of visit	To meet with Sally Beeston and review how the year has gone within Art, Design and Technology areas.

Links with the College Improvement Plan How does the visit relate to a priority in the College Improvement Plan?

Leadership and Management: 2. Senior Leaders and Middle Leaders are highly visible and challenging (Governors are highly visible and challenging).

5. Distributed leadership to ensure standards of teaching and learning.

Governor observations and comments

E.g. How long did the visit last? What did you observe? What did you learn? What good practice was seen? What would you like clarified?

I attended Groby CC for a two-hour visit to the area of Art, Design and Technology with the Curriculum Leader. I got an opportunity to talk with three students who were in for an informal session with one of the teachers in Product Design.

The area continues to be vibrant and engaging. We walked through Graphics, 3D and the Textiles areas – student work was on display in all areas. The Curriculum Leader commented that the current cohort predicted grades were anticipated to be lower than in previous years because the year group were not creating work to the very high standards in the past year. The Curriculum Leader explained that occasionally a year group might present a different ethos but that she was optimistic that those who were completing had been supported and encouraged in the same ways as in previous years but that it seems to have yielded different outcomes. The Curriculum Leader commented that she thinks the current year group's work going into their second year will again be of the usual high standards.

I asked to visit the Resistant Materials/Product Design area because we had discussed at length the change from Product Design to Resistant Materials during the examination meeting at the beginning of the academic year. The Curriculum Leader agreed to have a look at the area, but she informed me of the change of plan in year to switch back to the Resistant Materials syllabus. I was surprised at this since Resistant Materials was an area of the curriculum that had low success. Sally explained that due to a change of staffing, the new member of staff was confident that the Resistant Materials course was more appropriate than the Product Design.

I could sense that there were some concerns about the progress of the students from the Curriculum, and we discussed the area in a very open and honest way. Four or five learners were sitting in one of the classrooms, and I asked if I could have a short conversation with the learners to see how it is for them.

I visited the workshop and could see end of year pieces on a workbench, waiting for marks. I am not an expert in this field, but the work seemed to be of an adequate standard and there was varying quality to my untrained eye. Some of the work appeared to be complete, others less so. I could see a variety of different techniques with metal, plastic, wood and glass.

Sally told me that the grades for Product Design are predicted to be low due to changes during the year. Three students joined us and I asked them if they would show me their pieces on the bench and rather embarrassingly they did – one learner appeared quite proud of his work, but another was telling me of several reasons why his was not finished. Sally told me later that the final grades/assessments had been made and that the student who had not finished would not be able to submit that piece again/finish the piece.

I spoke to the learners, asking how the year had gone – they were very honest and I thought, very understanding of the situation they had faced. What they explained to me was that they had a change of teacher and that before the current teacher joined that they didn't do much practical at all and once the new teacher had started that they then started to work



on practical. They appeared to fully understand the change of syllabus and were accepting of the situation. They really valued the work of the current member of staff and that of the technician.

I asked why they had chosen this topic and all three agreed that they wanted something practical, to work with their hands and get new skills. Two of the three were planning to go to study Construction at an FE College next year and the third was planning to take a sports course at an FE College. They all agreed that if they could do something practical at GCSE level, this would be ideal for them. I asked whether it was Resistant Materials they wanted to do, or something like brickwork or carpentry and they all agreed that an industry type skill would be better for them and they appeared positively vocal about that. What came across was that they wanted to learn a skill in a 'trade' rather than just Resistant Materials.

The learners were polite, welcoming and were very happy to answer questions – they were a credit to the College.

The Curriculum Leader explained to me that the year had not been an easy one and that the new member of staff (temporary covering a long term sick leave) had been instrumental on getting the group to where they are now.

We returned to the Textiles room and I asked if I could see the area of Food Technology. Sally showed me around briefly as time was running out for our meeting – I only got a very quick tour of the area. My comments about the area is it looks very dated – very much like an old school cookery area – it reminded me of my own high school (which is more than quite a few years ago). The area does look very much in need of updating, but I also know how expensive that is.

However, the displays were very eye catching (hanging from the ceiling) and showed a variety of foods / menus and techniques covered by the area.

Any key issues arising for the governing body

e.g. The way resources are allocated, the way the school communicates, progress in implementing a key policy

The Resistant Materials course – can the College ensure stability and continuity, ideally retaining the current member of staff? Also, what can the College do to raise levels of achievement in the area?

Can the College consider any other practical skills/coursework/awards that could be offered to expose those who want to with some kind of industry knowledge or practice?

The Food Technology area – can the College consider any upgrade to make the area feel more up to date?

Forward to:

Firstly to Principal for checking as draft.

When agreed to Clerk of Governors for circulation to governors

Follow up action

Record any action agreed by the governing body with regard to this visit.

Could I have any predicted grades for resistant materials if in place.