

## The NAAIDT Response to the Proposed Curriculum

*The National Association of Advisers and Inspectors in Design and Technology (NAAIDT) has taken an active part in consultations on revisions to the statutory Order during recent years. On receipt of the May 1994 proposals its executive committee met and subsequently corresponded with all members to raise the major issues for debate during the next stage of consultation.*

*To contact NAAIDT, send SAE to: The Hon Sec. NAAIDT, 124 Kidmore Road, Caversham, Reading, Berks. RG4 7NB*

At the time of writing the NAAIDT response to the latest proposals has not been finalised but discussions have begun to highlight some of the strengths and weaknesses. Broadly it is felt that things are moving in the right direction but there are still some fundamental issues to clarify and, in some areas, detailed work to be undertaken.

NAAIDT has an established policy statement on design and technology and revisions to the Order are considered in the light of the curriculum position set out in this policy as well as making reference to the aim of the review as outlined on page i of the proposals.

**Attainment Targets** — the two AT structure was proposed by NAAIDT at the time of the first revision and we have been consistent in our support for it. The structure clearly identifies Designing and Making as the central features of D&T. The Association, however, would wish to emphasise that there are aspects of designing such as research, investigation, exploration and evaluation which must not be overlooked. The removal of ATs 1 and 4 must not be interpreted as the demise of these essential aspects of D&T activity. To this end the Association is pleased to note the inclusion of planning and evaluation within the designing and making sections of the proposed PoS. We particularly welcome the fact that, through the format and, in most cases through the content, the planning and evaluation material relates to both designing and making. It is felt, however, that there is more work to be done on the evaluation section of the PoS, particularly at KS4 where the evaluation of products is emphasised with little mention of the design process. Also the concept of planning at KS1 is unclear and not a good basis for progression. It would be helpful to introduce statements such as: 'describe what they are going to do.'

**Level Descriptions** — The aim of simplifying summative assessment is wholeheartedly supported by the Association. We believe that the concept of a 'best-fit' approach to assessment through the level descriptions will make summary judgements more manageable. Whilst agreeing with the concept we feel, however, that more work needs to be done on the wording of the descriptions to ensure that they adequately define the key elements that characterise each level and support teachers in recognising potential differences between pupils. It is also recognised that, in this new

approach to summative assessment, there is a heavy reliance on professional judgement and there will be a need for training and moderation. It is helpful that the proposals identify clearly that the role of the level descriptions is to support summary judgements. A particular concern to many NAAIDT members currently is the varied practice in relation to formative assessment, as identified through the OFSTED inspection process. It is with interest therefore that we note the suggested new approach to day-to-day assessment of pupils' work ie. using the programmes of study. We believe that this is an area where teachers will need considerable support and guidance.

**Programmes of study** — the Association supports the direct link between the KS PoS and the ATs, as shown through the introduction of the sections on 'designing skills' and 'making skills'. The introduction of a section entitled 'knowledge and understanding' is also welcomed as it reduces the ambiguity about what should be taught and recognises the need for pupils to apply knowledge to their designing and making activities in order to establish relevance and rigour.

The Association is pleased to see a section in the PoS which describes the 'range of activities' but there is some concern about the lack of reference to the inter-relationship between the three classifications of activity. Whilst it is recognised that there are times when these activities take place independently from each other, it is felt that there are dangers in pupils engaging too often in 'focused practical tasks' or 'activities in which pupils investigate, disassemble and evaluate products', in isolation from and without reference to their designing and making assignments. It is felt that care is needed to ensure that the balance is right to ensure the development of design and technology capability. Similarly the knowledge and understanding as defined in the PoS must be taught through the range of activities.

Having identified a level of satisfaction with the main headings in the PoS, there are, however, some concerns about the level of detail within some sections of the PoS and the discrepancies between Key Stages, for example, under 'knowledge and understanding' the 'materials' section is much more detailed for KS3 than for KS1 and 2. It is felt that there are some areas of the PoS where further detail



### THE INDEPENDENT INSPECTION OF TECHNOLOGY IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOL

The Bush Hotel,  
Farnham, Surrey

Thursday 15th  
December 1994

The course will identify the specific responsibilities of those who will be inspecting Design and Technology within the statutory framework, and consider how schools, departments and faculties can prepare for inspection.

Applicants invited from OFSTED Inspectors, teachers and advisers of D&T.

Course leaders will be:

- John Hardwick,  
*Educational Consultant*
- Omry Bailey, *NAAIDT*
- Mike Steels,  
*Educational Consultant,  
Registered Inspector*

Further details can be obtained from the Professional Development Unit, SCSST,  
Tel: 071-278 2468

and specificity are required within the legal framework ie. what must be taught. There are other aspects which need exemplars and guidance which will be best provided through non-statutory guidance. The Association supports the provision of non-statutory guidance and is in a position to help in the preparation of such material. It is felt that the guidance should be published at the same time as the new Order.

**Designing and Making Assignments** — the Association has agreed with the concept of design and make tasks/assignments since the idea was introduced in the 1992 revision. Generally it is felt that the minimum number, recommended for each KS within the current proposals, is appropriate although some guidance on the curriculum planning issues will be needed. An area for further discussion is the nature and level of specification for the design and make assignments at each KS. The requirements for the assignments raise issues about materials beyond those highlighted by the optional food at KS3 issue, for example, are textile materials also optional, what about construction materials — are these sufficiently specified? Do we all share the same definition of compliant materials? Is the inclusion of a choice of control systems at KS3 appropriate?

The Association regrets the emphasis placed in the response form to the issue of food at KS3 when there are other issues that equally merit full debate such as those relating to other materials and the nature of content. The Association believes that pupils should use materials as appropriate to the design situation applying the relevant knowledge and skills. If food is optional, matters of breadth and progression are raised. If it is compulsory the matter of time must be considered as it is assumed that the 63 hours is based on delivering the compulsory material as set out in the proposals.

**Key Stage 4** — the defining of a set of core requirements at KS4 is important. It is felt that it is essential to use this core as a basis for all courses and, to balance the idea of introducing flexibility at this stage with the need to clearly define the nature of the subject and retain its integrity. There are concerns about whether the core as defined can be delivered in 5% of curriculum time and about accreditation and 'currency' of short courses. The Association has always advocated at least 10% of curriculum time at KS4. The exercise of

designing a short course and then extending can lead to a lack of coherence, although the flexibility of working predominantly in one material overcomes this, to some extent. The question still remains as to whether the content of the core in the proposals is appropriate and whether it can be largely delivered through single materials. To be judged fully, the KS4 proposals must be seen alongside the GCSE criteria, and these are not available at the time of writing.

**Information Technology** — the Association has consistently supported a structure that separates IT and D&T and therefore welcomes the proposal to present D&T and IT discretely and, to remove any links in relation to assessment and reporting. To emphasise the separation in relation to structure it would be helpful if the two could be presented using different colours for folders, etc. The Association is strongly in favour of the references to IT in D&T within each KS PoS and believes that there is a need to further develop the content to ensure that elements of IT which support designing and making, for example, control, modelling and graphics, are made explicit. The Association has recently produced a guideline on IT within D&T which will support planning in this area.

**Format** — the format is acceptable in setting out the statutory requirements for the subject but it is not a helpful format for the teacher who is working at a KS and trying to get an overview of what needs to be covered, nor is it helpful for whole school or cross KS planning. Presentation in a variety of forms would be helpful and avoid hundreds of teachers 'cutting and pasting'. At the primary phase the appropriateness of a common format across subjects should be taken into account.

**Definition** — it is helpful to clarify the nature of D&T. The proposed definition 'Design and technology capability requires pupils to combine their designing and making skills with knowledge and understanding in order to design and make products', regrettably does not include the concepts of creativity and quality, nor is reference made to testing and evaluation. NAAIDT in previous responses has suggested a definition: 'Design and Technology capability requires pupils to combine their designing and making skills with knowledge and understanding in order to design and make products of quality which can be evaluated and tested in use'.

NAAIDT recognises how essential it is to 'get it right' this time and we await with a keen interest the outcomes of the consultation. Members of the Association will through inspection, advice, courses and publications be supporting schools in planning for implementation in September 1995.