

Editorial

This issue of *Design Technology Teaching* celebrates a watershed, both for the subject area and for *Design and Technology Teaching* itself.

For the subject area the watershed has been the achievement of a Statutory Document that specifies the legal requirements for the delivery of Technology in the National Curriculum. The past year has been one of rapid development. The Design and Technology Working Group chaired by Lady Parkes reported in June and its findings were almost universally welcomed. But the Draft Order for Technology published by the National Curriculum Council in December produced a very different reaction. The name of the subject had reverted to Technology (as originally drafted in the 1988 Education Act), the Attainment Targets had been reworded and this generated a number of problems, Attainment Target Two (Generating a Design Proposal) was seen to be methodologically unsound; Attainment Target Four was renamed Evaluating instead of Appraisal — which seemed to many people to be a less appropriate term. The Programmes of Study were sharply reduced to number from the original sixteen to four thereby reducing, in many specialists' view, the rigour and demands of the subjects and offering instead a subject area that appeared to be a soft option compared with Science, Maths and English.

Many organisations expressed their dismay, for example the College of Preceptors headlined its response 'Taking the Technology out of Technology'. The College saw the Draft Order as seriously undermining recent curriculum development work in this area of learning and likely to put back examples of good practice by at least five years.

Now, in March, the Secretary of State for Education has issued the Statutory Document entitled *Technology in the National Curriculum* which offers some reassurance. The emphasis on Design Technology as the core of the subject is restored; Design and Technology and Information Technology are seen as two linked components. The Secretary of State writes 'The two components of Technology — Design and Technology and Information Technology — involve essential skills of pupils in the modern world. We will need to pay particular attention to all aspects of design, including cost, quality and appearance. That is what this curriculum is intent to foster'.

This welcome reinforcement of the significance of design characterises much of the Statutory Document and though it by no means restores the Parkes' emphasis it

certainly retrieves some of the ground which had been lost in the National Curriculum Council Draft Order. Most significantly it is a reassurance that the torrent of representation to the National Curriculum Council — unprecedented in the short history of the Council — was effective and that, despite the cynicism of many colleagues, led to significant changes — indeed, in some areas, a remarkable reversal of the National Curriculum Council's positions.

Yet though a modest victory has been achieved there is still much to give rise to concern. Not only is there the need to fill out and interpret the Attainment Targets and Programmes of Study (which will take effect from Autumn 1990 for Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 and Autumn 1993 for Key Stage 4) but the general readiness of schools is still a matter of great anxiety. The problem was spelt out clearly in the recently published report *The Standard of Education* the Annual Report of Her Majesty's Senior Chief Inspector of Schools. He writes 'very few primary schools are sufficiently prepared to teach Technology successfully. The excellent work in a small number of pioneering schools shows that young children are well able to achieve high standards, but for that to be successful throughout the system will call for greatly increased teacher confidence and competence as well as equipment and materials'.

About secondary schools, he goes on to say 'in two-thirds of schools inspected this year technology was judged to be inadequate and wider applications across the curriculum as a whole were not well handled. National Curriculum Technology is at risk in secondary schools due to shortfall in the teaching recruitment'.

This issue of *Design Technology Teaching* offers practical help through example, suggestion and advice to facilitate the work of primary and secondary schools. Kane presents a detailed account of work with a class of top infants on making musical instruments which is highly appropriate to the requirements of Key Stage 1 Technology, and the Wigan team offers a similarly focused contribution on kiln construction. Klein develops a strategy wherein the school library can make delivery of the National Curriculum increasingly effective in regard to Design Technology, so achieving a partnership that, for many schools, will be new and very fruitful.

Marden from the Goldsmiths' team explores the role of design and communication in current developments. Denton from Loughborough examines the

role of group work and Davidson from Huddersfield looks at the nature of technology itself in the curriculum. These four analyses will lead teachers to the heart of some of the planning necessary for a thinking, active implementation of the National Curriculum.

More practical issues follow. Bottrill explores the important issues that arise in delivering technology in higher education using the interesting developments at the Roehampton Institute as a case study. A note on new Schools' Television offerings in technology follows and the issue concludes with a script for any readers who are required, at short notice, to produce a timely school play.

The second watershed for *Design Technology Teaching* is also momentous. The new Design and Technology Association (DATA), which has already achieved a spectacularly successful beginning, has adopted *Design Technology Teaching* as its official journal. From now on all members of DATA will receive the journal as part of their membership package and will therefore not need to subscribe separately for the journal — unless of course they wish to obtain a duplicate copy.

Whilst it will still be possible for individuals to subscribe to *Design Technology Teaching* without membership to DATA, we strongly urge all our readers to join. The advantages of a strong and effective professional and political organisation have never been more urgent in Design and Technology — they seem compelling and, at last, within our grasp. With generous support of the Smallpeice Foundation the prospect is real and is happening. Almost all professional associations in our field have already teamed up with DATA. This issue carries a message from the Director of the Association — Gordon Warren — and a subscription form is printed on page 128. The Editors and the DATA steering committee believe that the combination of the strength of the new association and the strength of *Design Technology Teaching* will, together, be a formidable force in the affairs of our subject area.

John Eggleston

Due to heavy pressure of space book reviews are held over to the next issue.