

Reviews

Design and Woodwork

A. Yarwood
Hodder and Stoughton, 1984, £3.95

The cover and look of the book from a first casual glance, leads the reader into expecting more than is offered.

The book has three main sections concerned with approaches to woodwork through a design base. The first section covers basic design and shows examples of work as 'school' projects, which frankly fail to excite or encourage an innovative approach to creative design using the qualities that wood has to offer. Many examples have an air of the 1960's where many appear to be at home.

However the two remaining sections show an interesting compilation of information, which ranges from an explanation of ergonomics through materials, construction and fittings on to economic considerations and surface finishes. This information can be used to advantage as a basic reference for investigative work by the average school pupil since the vocabulary used is simple and direct.

It is a great pity that the graphic work supporting the text ventures little from basic isometric drawing. One would have hoped for a more dynamic layout when considering the book from a graphical communication stand point. Greater use of perspective drawing and basic rendering techniques would have added visual impact which at present the book lacks.

As a book to dip into it has its uses, but needs to be supplemented by publications which show more up to date examples of work being undertaken by many schools involved with aspects of 'design' through the use of wood as the main material.

J.N. Atkins

The Art of Play

CSV/Ethnographic Resources for Art Education, £8.00

Teaching resources which reflect the current upsurge of interest in multi-cultural education are available in some curriculum subjects. Art and Design is an area that has been largely neglected.

The Ethnographic Resources for Art Education project of Birmingham Polytechnic has devised some excellent teaching materials based upon an anthropological and comparative approach to art and design education. It has cooperated with the Advisory Service of the Community Service Volunteers in the production of *The Art of Play*. This work pack provides teachers with a series of ideas based upon traditional toys and playthings from a variety of cultural groups. The objects are shown in cultural and historical context thus

eliminating many of the anxieties of teachers approaching multi-cultural themes for the first time.

The material is attractively presented as a folder containing information sheets, activity sheets and posters on four topics; Kites, Playing Cards, 'Dolls' and Sound-Making Objects. The pack would meet the needs of teachers in Primary Schools and of specialist Art and Design teachers in the lower Secondary School. The worksheets are clear and should act as a stimulus for introducing an awareness of other ways of life in an enjoyable and practical way. They provide a vehicle for experiencing the use of a variety of materials and processes. The common interests which are to be found in play activities throughout the world are revealed in a graphic manner.

The emphasis of the pack is upon cultures which are not represented in any great number in Britain. It is unfortunate that in the section on kite making no reference has been made to the rich traditions which are to be found in the countries of origin of many of the cultural and ethnic minorities in Britain. Bangla Desh, Viet Nam, Pakistan and North India all have varieties of kite which are similar in form as well as their own unique designs.

The Tutors Notes which accompany the pack are a valuable resource and give a concise introduction to multi-cultural issues related to art and design, race and culture and cross curricular activities. A useful and practical addition is a section on class planning for the activities described in the workpack and for developing ideas from them. A short report of projects linked with the pack and undertaken in Birmingham area schools is included and should give encouragement to the hesitant.

Linking the activities described with topics such as festivals, materials and processes is facilitated by the provision of an index.

The pack is essentially a model for teachers wishing to embark upon a more meaningful curriculum in our society of many cultures. Extensive bibliographies are included in each section of the pack. There is even a discography in the Sound Making Objects section. These provide the teacher with sufficient background knowledge to adapt the material to any level of ability.

This is a most welcome addition to the sparse resources for multi-cultural work in the areas of art and design.

Iain MacLeod-Brudenell

Further Graphic Communication

J.A. Austen
Hodder and Stoughton, £2.95

The growing discontent in our schools with traditional technical drawing courses has aroused interest in new books containing the words 'graphic communication' in their titles. For those teachers

seeking a broader content for their drawing courses whilst retaining with less emphasis the essential elements of the traditional courses then this book will be useful.

This latest offering covers a wide range of topics which includes areas, surveying, graphs and charts, flow and circuit diagrams, networks, pictorial drawing, basic geometry and formal technical drawing all packed into 96 pages. The book, with its companion 'Graphic Communication and Observation' is aimed at covering the current examination syllabuses at CSE, GCE O-level and 16+. Those teachers looking for a graphics book to enhance and develop visual awareness and graphic communication as an integral part of CDT will be disappointed.

Diagrams and text are well produced and each topic is condensed to give the essential information. The book will suit the O-level pupil but the incline of difficulty with the drawing examples and exercise questions will be too much for the average CSE pupil.

The author makes his case for the inclusion of geometry based on its 'training of logical thought' and where possible appropriate geometry is covered in those sections of the book which require it. However the book begins with a basic geometry section which contains no follow up exercise questions, presumably left to the teachers' discretion and a later section dealing with loci, lines in space, interpenetrations and auxiliary views. The line by line approach is used here with the teacher providing the understanding.

Some attempt is made to relate graphics to everyday life in the section Charts and Diagrams. It is a pity that the wealth of graphic examples used by the media is not capitalised upon.

There is very little formal engineering drawing contained within the book. It does appear in a Project Drawing section which quickly moves on to investigation and design based exercises. The author leads the reader through these exercises by asking a series of structured questions. It is a pity that the use of tone, texture and colour is omitted in this last section and the use of modelling to develop design solutions is ignored, but then the book is solely concerned with drawing.

J.M. Atkins

Art, Craft, Design and Technology For the middle years

Isle of Wight Teachers' Group
Longmans, £2.50

The publication of this book allows teachers of Art, Craft, Design and Technology everywhere to benefit from careful research and development into the subject conducted by teachers in Isle of Wight schools as part of an NFER Research Project. In an attempt to produce an agreed approach to the teaching of ACDT in middle schools, the team looked for answers to the following.

- Why is ACDT taught: what practical and thinking skills does it aim to nurture in 9-13 year olds?
- What methods are used to achieve the various objections?
- How do you organise the wide range of possible activities?
- How do you evaluate pupil progress?

The result is an overview of the subject which will prove invaluable to those involved in planning and carrying out structured courses that will allow children in middle schools to develop their full potential in this important area of study.

J. Smith

Ways and Means: The Craft, Design and Technology Education of Girls

John Catton
Longmans, £3.50

Ten years after the Sex Discrimination Act, Craft, Design and Technology remains one of the most strongly sex-stereotyped subject areas of the secondary school. The pamphlet points out that in 1980, a total of 9,450 girls entered technically based examinations at CSE and GCE O-level in England, accounting for only 3.02% of the total entry. Yet CDT is a vitally important area of the curriculum because it helps girls and young women to become more independent in their day to day lives, their home and their place of work. Furthermore it helps them to take a full and active part in a wide range of issues and aspects of life in our industrial society. Perhaps most importantly it is particularly important to young women for entry to training courses and careers in scientific and technical areas. The pamphlet states that society is so steeped in sex-stereotyping that fundamental inequalities are not recognised. They are not recognised because they are expected, often at a subconscious level. Teachers, parents and pupils find: 'It is easy to revert to the biased and stereotyped behaviour society seems to expect.' The pamphlet explores

strategies for change in CDT and outlines ways in which girls can be encouraged: arranging visits by women working or training in CDT-related fields in industry; requesting women student teachers of CDT from local education establishments; checking textbooks and other teaching materials for sex-stereotyping or bias.

The attitude of the teacher is seen to be central to change. Teachers must examine their use of language as well as ensuring the involvement of all pupils in all aspects of the lesson. They should also expect similar quality work from girls and boys and girls' confidence should be boosted through encouragement, support and praise.

The underachievement of girls in CDT is seen to be a likely result of a number of negative factors to which there is no simple solution.

Once CDT teachers see what is wrong they will, the author hopes they will: 'Become sensitive to the often subtle inequalities in the education of girls and boys. The subsequent implementation of various strategies is not difficult when attitudes are positive.'

Teachers need to develop strategies for effective teaching with mixed groups; the CDT curriculum requires careful scrutiny with the different previous experiences and interests of girls and boys in mind; and the public image of the subject is in drastic need of updating.

J. Slater

Good Practice in Industrial Education

Gordon J.H. Vincent
Staffordshire Education Authority

The publication of this report (Vol.17 No.2 Summer 1985; p.113) has unfortunately been postponed until early 1986. Readers making enquiries will be notified by the publishers when it becomes available.

One of the 110 winners in the 1985 Young Electronic Designers Competition — pictured is Sunil Biswas of Brentwood School with his project, an ultrasonic remote mains switching device.

