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Mrs M Rumsey
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Dear Mrs Rumsey

Ofsted 2010–11 subject survey inspection programme: art, craft and design

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of staff and pupils, during my visit on 29 September 2010 to look at work in art, craft and design.

The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to our national evaluation and reporting. Published reports are likely to list the names of the contributing institutions but individual institutions will not be identified in the main text without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included: interviews with staff and pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of four part-lessons, including two joint observations with you.

The overall effectiveness of art, craft and design is good.

Achievement in art, craft and design

Pupils' achievement in art, craft and design is good.

- Children experience good creative development during the Reception year. Most reach, and many exceed, the expected level by the time they join Year 1. They establish strong practical skills for later stages. Progress continues to be good for both, older boys and girls, and their overall attainment is above that seen nationally by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils' enjoyment of learning is a feature of lessons and they work with enthusiasm from an early age. Their behaviour is outstanding so they make the most of the time available and cooperate well with each other.
- Pupils' creative exploration of processes is particularly strong and confident, such as the effect of combining different papers in collage, or seeing how many different surface qualities can be achieved with paint.

They exploit their control of processes well to communicate ideas, although some more able pupils do not achieve as much as they might in making full use of their skills to achieve more ambitious results.

- They develop good skills in drawing for different purposes, including to observe and to depict imagined ideas. For example, Year 6 pupils used drawings taken directly from the landscape to inform imaginative pieces.
- Pupils are keen to evaluate and refine their ideas. They are often successful in doing so and value the making responses reflecting their individual creativity. However, occasionally, in some lessons they are unsure of the features of successful work in order to do this fully.
- Good progress in learning about the work of other artists is evident in pupils' well-developed understanding of those they have looked at, and their awareness that creative practice is supported through reference to the work of others.

Quality of teaching of art, craft and design

The quality of teaching of art, craft and design is good.

- Staff are enthusiastic when teaching the subject. This is communicated clearly to pupils, who say it makes subject learning seem valued. Effective teamwork between staff means resources and ideas for projects are capitalised on, in a small school where everyone has multiple roles.
- Lessons are managed well with clearly structured activities, effective use of visual resources, including electronic whiteboards, and confident organisation of practical equipment. Display is used carefully to celebrate pupils' achievement and support learning. Staff are confident to give pupils interesting learning opportunities, such as learning outside the classroom.
- In most lessons, learning objectives are made clear to pupils so they understand what to do. These build sequentially on prior learning so that pupils appreciate the overall direction of their work. On occasion, insufficient emphasis is given to ensuring pupils consider the purpose of their work and the impact on an intended audience, so as to reflect on its strengths and what needs improving.
- The assessment of pupils' progress over time is tracked well and teachers make good overall use of knowledge about their varied attainment when planning lessons. Teachers' discussions with individual pupils are helpful in moving them on. Progress is slower in some lessons, or parts of lessons, where opportunities are missed to vary pupils' work fundamentally so as to challenge them. This affects more able pupils who could be asked more probing questions in discussion or given more advanced practical work.

Quality of the curriculum in art, craft and design

The quality of the curriculum in art, craft and design is good.

- The experiences offered to pupils ensure that they enjoy the subject. They have been adapted well to include a variety of themes and genres, to

which pupils respond positively. Work made at the school rightly reflects its location, for example including reference to the landscape.

- The subject curriculum links closely to that in other areas of learning, through themed work. These connections have been refined over recent years and add value to learning, for example by associating creative practice with historical events. The subject is also used well to explore aspects of the school's Christian ethos through the themes studied.
- Good progression in learning is ensured through linking schemes of work to age-related subject expectations, starting in the Reception year. Useful discussion takes place between staff to ensure year-groups tackle new learning as they move up through largely mixed-age classes.
- Pupils have good opportunities to work on different scales through a wide range of two-dimensional processes, including computers. The school has identified that work in three-dimensions and using craft-based techniques is less well developed, and is working to tackle this.
- Effective steps to broaden pupils' experiences of creative practice include visits to museums and galleries, both in London and locally, such as a silk museum relating to textile production in a nearby town. Experience of the art of non-western cultures is gaining ground, including through links now established with a school in Africa.
- Extra-curricular activities are popular with pupils of all ages, who are keen to attend the after-school clubs to expand on the work done in lessons.

Effectiveness of leadership and management of art, craft and design

The leadership and management of art, craft and design are good.

- Subject leaders are committed to the development of the subject, with the joint leaders working well together to ensure it has a high profile and within pupils' broader experiences.
- They work with colleagues effectively to develop their expertise through training and joint working. They have good subject skills and use these well, for example to build staff confidence in basic areas like teaching drawing or making reference to the work of other creative practitioners.
- Ambitious goals for further progress underpin subject development plans. These relate well to school-wide targets, such as better assessment, where art, craft and design has made good progress in recent years. Nevertheless, some priorities are not linked closely enough to the actions intended to bring them about or to the measurable impact they are intended to have on pupils, so as to accelerate improvement.
- Good subject monitoring involves regular scrutiny of planning and work, as well as informal visits to lessons. This gives leaders a good awareness of the quality of provision. However, there is scope for sharpening the process further. Namely, by referring more systematically to the existing tracking data to check the progress by different groups of pupils, and by using lesson observation more thoroughly to identify where teaching could be improved and check the impact of initiatives to bring this about.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- improving pupils' progress further by:
 - ensuring pupils always understand clearly the characteristics of successful work so that they can take the initiative in deciding how well they are doing and what to do next
 - ensuring the content of all stages of lessons is accurately matched to pupils' capabilities, most notably those of more able pupils.
- improving the impact of subject leadership further by:
 - stating more explicitly in development plans the steps intended to bring about change, and how the impact on pupil outcomes will be checked
 - enriching the evidence used in monitoring through wider reference to pupil tracking data and more rigorous observation of subject teaching.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop art, craft and design in the school.

As I explained previously, a copy of this letter will be published on the Ofsted website. It may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection. Except in the case of academies, a copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Long
Her Majesty's Inspector