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Dear Mrs Farrall

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 24 January 2011 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 five part-lessons, including a joint observation with a member of the senior leadership team.

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 make a good start in the Reception class so that from average starting points their creative development is good and most reach the expected level when they join Year 1. They make good use of two- and three-dimensional processes, including drawing, to respond to the world around them and establish a strong enjoyment of creative practice.
- Good progress continues between Years 1 and 6 so that the attainment of boys and girls is above that seen nationally by the time they leave. Older pupils continue to enjoy the subject, approaching lessons with enthusiasm.
- Pupils at all ages make good progress in exploring the properties of different materials and processes. Their skills develop well in basic areas

such as drawing and work shows particular strengths in the investigation of decorative elements, for example when depicting Egyptian artefacts.

- Progress in learning about, and from, other creative practitioners is good. Pupils enjoy opportunities such as that seen in a Year 5/6 class where they explored the use of visual language, including tone and colour, in a graphic novel, before designing their own pieces.
- Pupils are keen to respond individually to starting points so that their work is unique. They are often successful in doing this, but are sometimes not clear enough about their individual goals or how to achieve them to extend their work fully.

Quality of teaching of art, craft and design

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

- Pupils find lessons exciting because teachers lead the subject with enthusiasm. They work hard to prepare activities and to coordinate the management of lessons well with additional adults. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported effectively so that they make good progress.
- Discussion is used regularly to stimulate pupils' speaking, listening and thinking skills and is a strong feature of teaching. Teachers draw attention usefully to subject vocabulary and reinforce it so as to expand pupils' ability to articulate their ideas.
- Activities are structured thoughtfully to give a good amount of time for practical exploration. Resources are organised confidently by staff, including using technology such as electronic visualisers to show images of work by artists and pupils.
- Although the depth of teachers' subject knowledge varies, overall they demonstrate the use of processes confidently, and explore usefully with pupils the references to other artists' work.
- Lessons provide good development from prior learning. Teachers are aware of pupils' varied abilities and give effective support, especially in individual discussion. However, they do not routinely adapt tasks fundamentally enough, or consistently demonstrate a clear understanding of what characterises outstanding progress to boost achievement.

Quality of the curriculum in art, craft and design

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

- Pupils have opportunities to explore a wide range of materials when working in two dimensions and across art, craft and design disciplines. Drawing is returned to regularly and provides a good foundation for the use of other processes.
- A good breadth of experience in working three-dimensionally is offered in the Reception class. Older pupils gain satisfactory experience of using

sculptural approaches but these are not planned coherently to build their skills as comprehensively as they might.

- The themes studied are engaging and age-appropriate so that both boys and girls respond well. The links between the subject and other areas of the curriculum are valued and appreciated by pupils, especially in supporting design-based work, such as book illustration.
- Good use is made of links outside the school to enrich the curriculum and ensure the pupils' work reflects their location. For example, Year 3/4 pupils thoroughly enjoyed their work on site-specific art related to the pieces found in the housing development surrounding the school.
- Pupils have good opportunities to study other artists' work. Images of work are seen regularly in lessons, including contemporary and non-western sources. Good use is made of opportunities during visits to view artists' work directly. However, these are not regular enough, nor enriched by exposure to artists at work, so as to underpin even better achievement.
- Effective steps are taken to support more able pupils. These include entry to competitions and supporting pupils in preparing well for subject study at secondary school.

Effectiveness of leadership and management of art, craft and design

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

- Subject leaders are successful in securing a valued place for creative visual practice in the school. Pupils are proud of their work and the school environment reflects the achievement of all in lively displays.
- Subject monitoring involves a good range of planning and work scrutiny. This gives subject leaders a clear understanding of curriculum quality and areas for improvement. For example, broadening opportunities in three-dimensional work has been identified as a priority. Good account is taken of an expanding school population in planning for newly arrived pupils and the growing numbers of teaching spaces in use.
- The quality of teaching is monitored regularly as part of school-wide quality assurance. This ensures that subject teaching is good and has led to specific areas of strength, such as questioning. Nevertheless, the focus on subject-specific aspects of teaching is sometimes insufficient when lessons are observed.
- Professional development for staff is organised well by year teams working together to share good practice. This includes sharing skills in the teaching of techniques and ideas relating to artists' work. However, opportunities are sometimes missed to help teachers be sure about what to expect of pupils of different abilities and how to adapt their teaching more precisely.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- improving teaching further by helping teachers to tailor activities in lessons to match pupils' varied abilities with increased accuracy, and by monitoring the quality of subject teaching more explicitly

- broadening the curriculum to include a greater amount of three-dimensional work and more direct experience of artists' work, and artists at work, so pupils can see the creative process in action.

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