

Aviation House  
125 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231  
F 020 7421 6855  
[enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



6 December 2010

Ms S Coleman  
Headteacher  
St Margaret's C of E VA Primary School  
Whiteway Lane  
Rottingdean  
Brighton  
BN2 7HB

Dear Mrs Coleman

### **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 November 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 a joint observation with you.

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

#### **Achievement in art, craft and design**

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

- Children make good progress in subject-related areas of their creative development in the Reception class and most reach the expected level of attainment. Both boys and girls enjoy their activities and make particularly good progress in learning to manipulate and combine materials, for example when making collage.
- Pupils' progress between Years 1 and 6 is satisfactory and their attainment is in-line with that seen nationally by the end of Key Stage 2. They continue to enjoy the subject, approaching lessons with positive attitudes and behaving outstandingly well in lessons.
- As in their first year at school, pupils' strengths are in their confidence in handling materials when working in both two and three dimensions. For example, Year 4 had used mixed media well in constructing images of the

beach, and Year 6 had controlled pastel carefully in making large self portraits. Pupils' well developed social skills help them work together on collaborative pieces such as those made for a local festival parade.

- Pupils' achievement is held back by two areas of relative weakness. Their observational drawing is satisfactory but pupils' skills are not built systematically over time to give them good ability to record what they see or to develop imaginative ideas. Equally, pupils' capacity to evaluate and refine their work is hindered because they are not always clear enough about the qualities they are trying to achieve, so as to focus their thinking.
- Pupils value learning about other creative practitioners' work in support of their own learning. However, here too they do not always gain a deep enough understanding of the approaches used by the artists encountered so as to capitalise fully on them in developing their own creativity.

### **Quality of teaching of art, craft and design**

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

- Teachers approach lessons with enthusiasm. Resources, behaviour and time are generally well managed. Additional adults are deployed well to enable all pupils to participate. Staff are not afraid to tackle big and potentially messy work, or try new approaches to projects.
- Activities build logically overall from lesson to lesson. Teachers work hard to prepare practical tasks and references to other artists' work. Electronic whiteboards are used well to show images and structure discussion.
- Introductions to lessons normally give pupils a clear picture of what to do. However, communicating the effective use of processes, or key aspects of another artist's approach, is not always clear enough so that pupils know the features of good work and can make purposeful decisions about how well they are doing and what to do next.
- Teachers' assessment of pupils' progress in lessons is satisfactory. They are confident, for example to bring pupils together to discuss issues arising from their observations. Nevertheless, opportunities are sometimes missed in group and individual discussions to check not just that pupils know what to do, but why they are doing it.
- Pupils' progress over time is monitored by reference to the National Curriculum levels and teachers have a satisfactory knowledge of the ability of each. This information is not always exploited to adjust lesson activities to meet their varied needs, notably to ensure good progress in areas like drawing.

### **Quality of the curriculum in art, craft and design**

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

- The use of local resources and the environment is a strength of the provision. It widens pupils' awareness of what is available to them, directly enriches their learning and ensures their work reflects the school's location. For example, pupils visit Anne of Cleves House as part of their

Tudor theme, go drawing on the beach and attend workshops at local museums.

- Pupils experience a good range of direct and imagined starting points for their work. These include location drawing, handling artefacts such as a collection of Indian puppets, and the imaginative sources seen when the Reception class worked from the story *We're Going on a Bear Hunt*.
- Good references to the work of other artists are built into all projects. These ensure a balance between western approaches to art-making and those seen in other cultures at different periods.
- The curriculum is well-planned to include a balance of two and three-dimensional approaches, on different scales, including big collaborative pieces. However, teachers are not always clear enough about the expected level of attainment associated with processes at different ages, so as to plan for good or better progress.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about the themes underpinning their work. These appeal to both boys and girls and are valued by them because they are age-related and make connections to other areas of the curriculum.
- Projects undertaken offer pupils good scope to explore their own creativity, and teachers rightly expect them to develop individual responses. Pupils' relatively weak evaluative skills mean these opportunities are not always exploited.

### **Effectiveness of leadership and management of art, craft and design**

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

- The subject leader is passionate about the subject. Good impact has been made on the curriculum in recent years, significantly expanding the range of experiences offered and ensuring that the subject has a high profile in school. Display is used well to celebrate achievement and there are good plans for an in-school gallery to develop this further.
- The effective use of local resources to enrich the subject reflects well on the commitment and energy of subject leadership in keeping up to date on what is available and helping colleagues access it.
- Monitoring and evaluation through work and planning scrutiny give the subject leader a broadly accurate picture of provision. However, there is too little focus on monitoring learning in the classroom to check pupils' achievement and identify how teaching could be better.
- Subject development plans include suitable steps for further curriculum enrichment, but give too little emphasis to improving teaching. Staff development has enhanced teachers' overall understanding of different processes, for example through training sessions on three-dimensional work. However, they are less successful in ensuring that teachers know what constitutes good work and age-related attainment in areas such as drawing, so as to underpin their work in the classroom.

**Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:**

- improving the impact of teaching on pupils' progress by:
  - enhancing teachers' subject knowledge so they articulate more clearly the features of effective work to pupils, who in turn are more assured in evaluating their progress and deciding how to improve their work
  - ensuring lesson content takes greater account of pupils' differing ability
  
- improving the impact of subject leadership by:
  - sharpening the focus for subject development on improving teachers' specialist knowledge and understanding of good progression, for example in drawing
  - monitoring more closely the quality of learning in the classroom so as to check the impact of staff development and identify areas for improvement.

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**