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Dear Mrs Lloyd

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

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and pupils, during my visit on 2 February 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 lessons, including one in Reception class.

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

Achievement in art, craft and design

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

- The standards pupils achieve in art, craft and design by the end of Key Stage 2 are good and often outstanding. This represents very good achievement from their average creative abilities on entry into school.
- From Reception, wide-ranging opportunities enable pupils to develop their creativity, skills, knowledge and understanding progressively, as well as supporting them to be articulate, independent and reflective learners.
- Pupils who find some things difficult also make very good progress from their starting points because careful assessment of their work helps them to work at the speed and level that are right for them. High-quality care

and guidance from well-deployed adults encourage them to achieve their best.

- Pupils' behaviour and personal qualities are outstanding. They work extremely well on their own or when working in pairs or groups; in part as a result of the school's successful focus on developing pupils' self-esteem and confidence through their experiences in the creative curriculum.

Quality of teaching of art, craft and design

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

- Teaching is never less than good and often outstanding. Teachers are passionate about the subject and prepare lessons thoroughly, using a wide range of resources to capture pupils' imaginations and interest.
- Teachers' ongoing feedback to pupils in lessons and regular formal assessment feed well into detailed planning. Pupils confidently evaluate the quality of their own work and that of their peers; letting each other know what is good and what could make it even better. These strategies make sure pupils can make rapid progress from their starting points.
- Teachers successfully encourage pupils to research artists and styles and use their findings to develop their own responses; as evidenced in pupils' high-quality work in the style of Henry Moore. Indeed, pupils hold strong opinions and talk knowledgeably about the wide range of artists they study.
- Teachers help pupils to think of themselves as artists, to make decisions about materials they want to use, and to develop and refine their own ideas, often from similar starting points. All pupils have sketchbooks. Some, but not all, teachers ensure that these are used regularly to develop pupils' ideas.

Quality of the curriculum in art, craft and design

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

- The curriculum is designed around the National Curriculum but also importantly, around the school's own key themes for art, craft and design. These include strong links with the broader creative curriculum and an international dimension that support the subject very well.
- The balance of skills-based learning, 'art days' and creativity weeks, extend the curriculum successfully and harness pupils' interest and enthusiasm. A particular strength is the range of two- or three-dimensional resources and materials from which pupils can choose when developing their work.
- Pupils say that they value the 'artist in residence' who works with all of them each term. Visiting artists and visits out of school, including support from artists and craft workers from the Drumcroon Arts Centre, enable pupils to learn from, and work with, experts other than those in school and add to their stated enjoyment of the subject.

- Large-scale collaborative projects, such as the current Year 6 project, 'Who do we think we are', resulting from the school's successful relationship with the Manchester Creative and Urban Education partnership, enrich the curriculum and enable pupils to very successfully express their own ideas in a range of materials and in both dimensions.
- A wide range of additional opportunities enhances the curriculum further, such as art clubs, creative arts residential visits in the Lake District, visits to galleries and museums and investigative work in their own local community.

Effectiveness of leadership and management of art, craft and design

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

- Art, craft and design pervades the school because of leaders' passion and commitment to give the subject a central role in developing pupils' curiosity, sense of awe and wonder, independence and creativity, and to raise standards and achievement.
- Teachers' high-quality subject knowledge and skills result from having a good proportion of skilled teachers on the staff. They successfully support non-specialists in developing their confidence to teach the subject well. Experts from Drumcroom and their creative partnership, alongside professional development opportunities, promote teachers' expertise further.
- The subject coordinator is held to account very successfully for pupils' achievements through regular monitoring and evaluation of planning, teacher assessments, teaching and reviewing of pupils' work.
- A clear and succinct improvement plan emerges from ongoing monitoring and actions and targets are reviewed regularly with senior leaders.
- Leaders place a high priority on celebrating pupils' achievements. Top-quality displays fill corridors and walls across the school. Pupils are particularly proud of the regular art displays in the school's designated 'Art Gallery' which showcases their work to parents, carers and the local community.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring that sketchbooks are used consistently well across the school.

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

Margaret Farrow
Her Majesty's Inspector