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Mrs Jane Beckett
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Beckett

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 30 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.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included: interviews with staff and pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of three lessons.

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.

- From broadly average starting points in the Early Years Foundation stage, children make good progress in their creative development because of good-quality teaching, tenacious assessment and the well-planned, wide range of opportunities provided.
- In lessons, children successfully learn how to express their ideas in two and three dimensions. For example, they confidently express their thoughts and feelings about the colours of winter while they expertly mix their winter tones, or design ice collages in the snow.
- Pupils continue to make good progress during their time in school. Lesson observations and assessments of pupils' work show that their attainment is at least average and often good by the time they leave Year 6. Boys and girls achieve equally well.

- Pupils who have a particular talent in the subject are provided with additional experiences that successfully stretch them further. For example, by attending Saturday clubs at the local university, pupils access a wide range of interesting activities that builds their confidence and adds to their enjoyment and achievements in the subject.
- Pupils' observational drawing skills, digital media and textile work are particularly well-developed because of the good range of resources available; adults' subject knowledge; regular oral assessment; and well-timed use of praise. However, pupils say that they would like even more opportunities to develop their observational skills in their local community.

Quality of teaching of art, craft and design

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

- Teachers are enthusiastic and have good subject knowledge. They plan lessons meticulously, with clear learning objectives and success criteria. A wide range of resources is deployed to make sure that pupils can make choices, experiment and develop their own ideas.
- Good use of teacher demonstration and interactive whiteboards to show images of artists' work and artefacts helps to stimulate and maintain pupils' keen interest and enjoyment in their work.
- Assessment is developing well. Teachers have a good understanding of each pupil's current abilities and use this knowledge to plan activities that meet the different abilities and interests of pupils in lessons.
- Older pupils use their art and design books well to evaluate their work and develop their ideas, but the books are not used consistently across the school.

Quality of the curriculum in art, craft and design

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

- The subject is placed at the heart of the creative curriculum and this is helping to build pupils' skills and abilities in the subject as well as developing their interest, confidence and self-esteem.
- Well-planned opportunities build pupils' skills and knowledge progressively. Where topics do not easily support the subject, discrete opportunities are provided to ensure that pupils continue to make good progress.
- Pupils talk enthusiastically about the work of artists such as Modigliani, Picasso and Kandinsky and their influence on their own work. They appreciate the increasing use of computer-based art and animation packages, cameras or videos to develop and display their ideas and are particularly proud of their achievements in this range of media.
- Children are accomplished in working in two dimensions and using materials such as pastels, acrylic, charcoal and watercolour. Pupils use three-dimensional media less frequently; in discussion they asked for more opportunities to work on large-scale collaborative projects.

- 'Diversity days' and visiting artists enrich the curriculum well and help pupils to develop their good understanding of, and experimentation in, techniques and styles of art, craft and design from different cultures, such as Islamic and African art.
- The school is increasingly well supported by a number of 'artist' parents who come into school and share their expertise and passion for their specialism.

Effectiveness of leadership and management of art, craft and design

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

- The subject is valued highly as a key component in the creative curriculum. The coordinator and senior educational practitioner share their enthusiasm successfully with colleagues and pupils alike, giving support where necessary through coaching or professional development opportunities.
- The coordinator has an accurate view of the strengths and areas for improvement through regular monitoring of planning, teaching, and assessment, the use of pupil interviews and regular scrutiny of displays.
- The coordinator keeps up-to-date with new initiatives and ideas through reviewing appropriate websites and networking with other coordinators locally, successfully sharing this learning with staff.
- The 'link art-governor' is involved positively and proactively in the continuing and successful development of the subject. This, together with strong performance management arrangements, ensures that the coordinator is held to account effectively for pupils' achievements and the effectiveness with which resources are deployed.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- Developing pupils' skills, abilities and enjoyment further by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively in three dimensions and more opportunities to sketch and work outdoors
 - developing the use of sketch books more consistently 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 sent to your local authority and will be published on the Ofsted website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Farrow
Her Majesty's Inspector