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Mr S Archer
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Archer

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 16 March 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.

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

Achievement in art, craft and design

Achievement in art, craft and design is good.

- From below average abilities on entry into the Early Years Foundation Stage, children make good progress in their creative development because of the exciting range of well-planned opportunities that develops children's skills, confidence and creativity well. Children enter Key Stage 1 having achieved the expected levels for their age.
- Pupils continue to make good progress as they move through the school. Achievements are at least average and often good by the time they leave.
- The school's inclusive approach ensures that all pupils can achieve well, whatever their need. Lessons are adapted carefully and adults well deployed to meet the wide-ranging needs of the many pupils with special

educational needs and/or disabilities; including those who are visually impaired.

- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are excellent in lessons. They work well together and are cooperative and supportive of one another, sharing resources and equipment as well as 'bouncing ideas' off each other to develop their work further.

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 carefully, with clear learning objectives and success criteria.
- Key skills and techniques are carefully taught alongside opportunities to extend pupils' creativity. This helps to stimulate and maintain pupils' keen interest and enjoyment in their work and make good progress.
- Regular, half-termly assessment of pupils' work ensures that teachers have a good understanding of each pupil's abilities. However, occasionally this information is not used well enough to plan activities to ensure that pupils make rapid progress from their starting points.
- Sketchbooks are used well in some classes to help pupils develop ideas and practice techniques and skills but their use is inconsistent 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 curriculum has recently been redeveloped to ensure that pupils' skills and knowledge are built on progressively and to enable pupils to explore and experiment in a wider variety of two- and three-dimensional work.
- The use of music to develop pupils' creativity in the subject is very strong. This was evidenced in the diverse, colourful paintings that pupils produced in the style of Kandinsky; taking account of the contrasting moods pupils experienced after listening to contemporary dance music and the music of Wagner.
- 'Virtual' partnership days with a school in Durban and a range of visits out of school enrich the curriculum successfully. A three-year collaborative arts programme with other local schools has also added a strong dimension to the subject; for example linking design of puppets to support drama.
- Very good partnerships with two local specialist colleges provides pupils with opportunities to explore and experiment in broader ranges of materials and contexts than the school itself can offer; enabling them also to learn from and experiment with other high-quality teachers.
- Visiting artists and craftworkers support the curriculum effectively and pupils say that they enjoy working with them. They say they would like even more opportunities to work with such experts, especially on large-scale projects.

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 and responsibility for the subject is placed with the senior leadership team.
- Leaders successfully transmit their enthusiasm for the subject and their aspiration to be outstanding to colleagues and pupils alike. Pupils' progress has hastened over the past year as a result of this high-profile leadership.
- The team has a very accurate view of the strengths and areas for improvement and that is why they have prioritised the subject in current school improvement plan. Actions developed are monitored carefully, achievements celebrated and areas that could be better, are tackled well, particularly through training and development opportunities.
- Leaders report that the training and development days secured from specialist arts college staff were inspirational; providing a reinvigorated approach to teaching the subject across the school. This was evidenced in the good-quality work adorning walls and spaces in the school.
- The strong partnership with specialist arts college leading teachers helps the team to keep abreast of current initiatives in the subject as well continually learning new skills and techniques for themselves.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- providing more opportunities for pupils to work with, and learn from, contemporary artists and craft workers
- ensuring that the regular assessment information that teachers have about their pupils' achievements is always used to plan lessons to help pupils make the fastest possible progress
- 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