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9 February 2011

Mr G Robinson  
Headteacher  
St Mark's C of E Primary School  
Alexandra Street  
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Lancashire  
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Dear Mr Robinson

**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 31 January and 1 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 two jointly observed 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 with some strengths.

- Children in Reception experience a wide range of stimulating activities both indoors and out. Careful, regular assessment is used to extend children's experiences and from well-below average starting points, make good progress in their creative development by the time they enter Year 1. Their achievements in creative development are in line with that found nationally.
- Children develop good observational skills as they move through Reception. It was delightful to observe children maturely observing a mini-skeleton, drawing their own representations in chalk and then adeptly manipulating art straws to build-up their picture into three dimensions.

- Pupils make steady progress in developing their knowledge, skills and creativity during the rest of their time in school so by the time they leave in Year 6 most pupils reach expected standards for their age.
- Pupils' behaviour is good; they work enthusiastically when exploring different materials and media. For example, when designing bold designs for their lino prints in the style of William Morris work. They say they particularly like their many opportunities to work in three dimensions.

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

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

- Relationships are good and teachers are enthusiastic about the subject. These strengths are used successfully as a 'hook' to capture children's enjoyment and interest.
- Teachers prepare lessons well and classrooms are well organised. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively. Staff use a range of resources, including information and communication technology, artists' work and artefacts, to stimulate ideas and enable pupils to learn different styles and techniques.
- All pupils have the opportunity to work with the school's specialist art teacher in small groups, but pupils' good achievements in these sessions are not always built on in other lessons.
- Teachers' oral feedback and support in lessons successfully help pupils to know how well they are doing and encourage those who lack confidence to fully participate. However, formal assessment is not regular enough to ensure lessons are always pitched at pupils' prior achievements and this limits some pupils' opportunities to make faster progress.
- Teachers encourage pupils to develop their own ideas in both two and three dimensions, from shared starting points. However, there is not enough focus on practising and developing ideas through pupils' sketchbook work.

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

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

- A wide range of art, craft and design activities is embedded in termly cross-curricular topics. Termly creativity weeks add to pupils' enjoyment, where their own ideas and interests are influential in the activities on offer.
- The curriculum is enriched well by extended school activities, visits to the local community and visitors to school; from local craft workers to artists from Drumcroon, the local arts education centre and art gallery.
- Vulnerable pupils who access the nurture room and boys attending the 'lad's club' have extra opportunities to express themselves through art. This is helping to ensure they make similar progress to their peers and successfully builds their confidence and self-esteem.
- Art opportunities are used to build good relationships with parents and carers, and develops theirs, and their children's enjoyment in shared art

experiences as evidenced in the beautiful 'we all had a hand in it' murals developed for the school's peaceful sensory garden.

- The well-established partnership with the local church enables pupils to display their achievements to their local community. It also adds a deeper spiritual dimension to pupils' art, craft and design experiences.

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

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

- There has been a long standing commitment to the subject to contribute to pupils' enjoyment of school and raise their aspirations and achievements. Resources are well used to provide vibrant displays of pupils' work of which they are particularly proud.
- As part of that commitment, the governing body funds a specialist art teacher to work only in art, craft and design. She, and the recently appointed coordinator, work effectively together, supporting teachers' development of skills and sharing resources and ideas for teaching.
- Upon her appointment, the coordinator quickly evaluated the effectiveness of the subject through a thorough audit of practice. Plans have been developed to improve the weaker areas identified including monitoring of teaching and more regular assessment of pupils' work.

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

- increasing pupils' opportunities to develop ideas and skills through the use of sketchbooks
- developing regular formal assessment of pupils' work and using this to inform all lessons to ensure all pupils can make the best possible progress.

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**