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16 May 2011

Ms K Greig
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Greig

Ofsted 2011–12 outstanding practice survey visit: art, craft and design

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and students, during my visit on 5 May 2011. The visit focused on the impact of a project undertaken with Turner Contemporary to train Year 9 students as gallery guides.

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 senior staff, teachers and students; scrutiny of relevant documentation; and a visit to the newly opened Turner Contemporary to meet staff involved in the project.

Features of outstanding practice

- Aims for the project in relation to outcomes for the students are clear enabling effective planning and evaluation of the impact made.
- The school is determined to broaden students' awareness of the cultural and vocational opportunities offered by Turner Contemporary as a world-class venue for displaying art and design and to develop students' pride in developments in their town.
- Contemporary art practice is used as a vehicle for developing students' reflective thinking skills and creativity as they question the meaning and purpose of the work for which they act as guides for the public.
- Students' personal development and well-being benefit as they develop interpersonal skills and confidence to engage with people of varying backgrounds.

- Staff analyse students' learning in the project and their responses to the contemporary work seen so as to adapt the way in which departmental teaching introduces students to contemporary work.
- The development of long-term contacts with the gallery has enabled school staff to be involved in shaping the gallery's learning provision and ensured that the school is well placed to take advantage of what is offered.
- Effective communication between school and gallery staff during the project has identified strengths and weaknesses and any necessary adaptations required as the work unfolds.
- The school's senior leaders have shown commitment to the project over time so that resources, including staff development, are deployed and teachers are given the confidence to invest effort in the project because it is likely to be a sustained area of work for the school.
- The project has contributed to the development of community cohesion as young people are enabled to show themselves in a positive light to other age groups and students of varying backgrounds are engaged in a project which centres on the regeneration of the local area.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop and share outstanding practice at King Ethelbert 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 may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Long
Her Majesty's Inspector