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Mrs M Kerridge
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Kerridge

Ofsted 2011–12 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 9 May 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 four lessons.

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

Achievement in art, craft and design

Achievement in art, craft and design is satisfactory

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with lower than average skills and abilities in their creative development. They make good progress during their time in the school because a wide range of stimulating activities develops their creativity well; both indoors and out.
- From entry into Key Stage 1, pupils' progress slows and is satisfactory. They attain broadly average standards by the end of Year 6. Progress is accelerating however, because of improvements to the subject and to provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage over the past two years.
- Pupils who find the subject difficult make similar progress to their peers because of the individual care and support provided by adults in lessons.

Quality of teaching in art, craft and design

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

- Good relationships and pupils' good behaviour typify all lessons. Classrooms are well organised and teachers use interactive whiteboards, demonstration and a range of artefacts to stimulate pupils' interest and enjoyment effectively.
- Pupils apply themselves eagerly to their work and are encouraged to choose materials and tools when developing ideas. However, choices are limited and from shared starting points, pupils mainly complete similar work, limiting their creative responses, ability to take risks and think beyond the usual.
- Pupils enjoy learning about the work of other artists like Andy Goldsworthy; whose work energised Year 2 pupils to develop collaborative outdoor sculptures in a range of natural materials. However, the range of artists studied is narrow and key features of their work are not always exploited fully by teachers to develop pupils' own ideas and creativity.
- Occasionally, teachers do not use the assessment information they have about pupils' current abilities to plan work that challenges them fully. Nevertheless, teachers' ongoing feedback is well used throughout lessons to help pupils reflect on their developing work.
- Pupils value the opportunities they have to evaluate their own and their peers' work, which they say helps them to understand how well they are doing and celebrate successes. Their ability to fully reflect on their work and develop ideas is limited because the school does not use sketchbooks.

Quality of the curriculum in art, craft and design

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

- The curriculum is planned to teach key skills and knowledge and the language of art, such as colour and tone, progressively in most respects.
- A wide range of experiences and materials is provided for pupils to work within two dimensions. Opportunities to work in three dimensions are limited but improving. For example, through the recent addition of pottery sessions with a local pottery teacher.
- The use of digital media is underdeveloped in the subject, although pupils use some art-based software and have opportunities to work with cameras to capture images for their artwork and to record their successes.
- Pupils value the many opportunities they have to develop their work through visits to city galleries and museums. They have fewer opportunities to work with local artists and craftworkers.
- The school takes full advantage of its large grounds and panoramic view to enrich the curriculum. The recently upgraded outdoor area is providing an added stimulus to the development of pupils' large-scale collaborative work.

- Pupils say how much they enjoy art week and the work they created last year using the 'Picture This' National Gallery project as a starting point.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in art, craft and design

The effectiveness of leadership and management in art, craft and design is satisfactory.

- The subject is valued highly and over the past two years has become a key aspect of the developing creative curriculum. This focus is helping to accelerate pupils' achievements in the subject.
- The subject leader is well-qualified, well-motivated and supported to continue to improve the quality and impact of the subject. She works effectively with other staff to share resources and develop ideas for teaching. She provides useful advice and guidance when needed.
- Quality assurance mechanisms are improving and, alongside the regular monitoring of teachers' planning and pupils' work, the subject leader has developed a cycle of classroom observations to add rigour.
- The subject leader is very clear about what is working well and what could be better. For example, she knows that teachers need to improve the use of assessment of pupils' work in their lessons and plans are in place to tighten up current procedures.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- hastening pupils progress at Key Stages 1 and 2 by:
 - ensuring that all pupils have opportunities to develop open-ended responses to similar starting points
 - ensuring that all teachers use their knowledge about pupils' current abilities to plan lessons that help them make the fastest possible progress
 - developing the use of sketchbooks
 - enabling pupils to develop their ideas, skills, knowledge and creativity using a wider range of computer packages
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to work with local contemporary artists and craftworkers.

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