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Mrs Mary Claffey  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Claffey

### **Ofsted 2011-12 subject survey inspection programme: art, craft and design**

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of staff and pupils, during my visit on 23 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.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included interviews with staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of seven part-lessons, including joint observations with the subject leader.

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.

- From average starting points children make satisfactory progress in the visual aspects of their creative development in the Reception year. Boys and girls enjoy practical activities and make equal progress, with the majority reaching the levels expected by the time they start Year 1.
- Progress is satisfactory between Years 1 and 6 so that pupils' attainment is in line with that seen nationally when they leave. Girls progress faster than boys, developing better skills, knowledge and understanding because they sustain their work more independently and carefully in lessons.
- Most pupils enjoy the subject and approach lessons with positive attitudes. Some pupils, notably boys, lose confidence in their ability to use key skills such as drawing as they get older. This holds them back in developing their work as their expectations for what they can achieve are reduced.

- Pupils make good progress in learning to control materials such as paint and collage. They value learning about other artists' creative practice but do not always develop the necessary depth of understanding about the working methods employed so as to make full use of what they learn in supporting their own creativity.
- Progress by pupils is satisfactory in learning to evaluate and reflect on the development of their work. When they clearly understand the purpose of their tasks and the features of successful work progress is good because pupils can see what is working and what needs further work. However, this is not consistent in lessons and hinders pupils' ability to sustain their focus and refine their outcomes, particularly among the boys.

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

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

- Teachers work hard to prepare lessons, exploring artists' work and collecting resources such as objects or examples of practical work.
- Lessons are well managed by staff with materials, equipment and time used well. Relationships between staff and pupils are good so that classrooms offer pleasant environments for learning.
- Planning for lessons usually involves sound overall objectives which build on pupils' prior learning. Activities are typically well sequenced, including discussion, demonstration by staff and practical tasks. Pupils are well known and staff provide some good individual support but activities are not always adapted comprehensively enough to meet pupils' differing needs or ensure they understand what to do to reach stretching targets.
- Teachers' introductions to practical processes are confident, resulting in pupils' good progress in handling materials. Introductions to work by other artists are rightly a regular feature of lessons. However they do not always get to the heart of the approaches used so pupils can explore them fully. Indeed where teaching is enriched by visiting artists, pupils say what they like best is seeing the artist's approach laid bare, such as in their sketchbooks, so they can really 'think like' the artist.
- Additional adults work well with teachers to monitor and support behaviour and, in some lessons, to move learning on. Nevertheless on occasion they are not clear enough about the features of successful work so as to support pupils' learning fully.

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

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

- Pupils have satisfactory opportunities to explore a range of techniques and processes, albeit with greater breadth in two-dimensional work including drawing and using computers. Three-dimensional work involves good opportunities to explore construction and assemblage, starting in the Reception class. Pupils are offered some experiences of moulding with clay

but these are not comprehensive and they have limited opportunities to explore carving. Some innovative model making forms a useful part of home-study projects.

- The curriculum offers a satisfactory balance of art, craft and design activities and links logically to the work of creative practitioners. Pupils understand the common features of design which they may encounter both through art and design and through design technology.
- Through topic-based work pupils enjoy well-planned links to other subjects, including literacy and numeracy, and an interesting range of visits and visitors. The topics have been adapted well to appeal to different groups of pupils and make some useful visual connections to the local environment such as work based on images of farming.
- Although the curriculum is planned well to offer balanced coverage of different materials and processes, teachers do not always understand enough about progression in pupils' skills and creativity as they move through the curriculum so as to ensure they are challenged consistently.
- Satisfactory links are made with organisations outside the school, such as local artists and a nearby secondary school art department. These have brought benefits including tuition for pupils in using specific techniques, for example sculpture made by Year 5 and 6 pupils. There is good support for pupils to enter external competitions and this is motivating for them.

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

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

- The subject leader is keen to move the subject on and has taken some effective steps such as working with colleagues to review curriculum themes, supporting their planning and tracking pupils' progress more carefully so as to identify groups needing extra help. She is engaged on professional development in her own time to advance her practical skills.
- Subject monitoring involves a satisfactory range of evidence from scrutiny of pupils' work and staff planning, alongside recent developments in the formal assessment of pupils' attainment levels. However, the subject leader has too few opportunities to observe learning taking place or to refer systematically to assessment data so as to comprehensively identify strengths and weaknesses in provision.
- Strategic development planning contains satisfactory goals, including monitoring pupils' progress more carefully in key areas such as drawing. Nevertheless, the priorities identified do not include all the areas needing improvement, notably boys' progress, nor is it always clear how the impact made on pupils will be checked.

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

- Improve the impact of teaching on learning, especially for boys by:
  - adapting lesson tasks better to ensure all pupils reach their full potential

over time

- ensuring pupils fully understand the approaches adopted by the artists they study and the features of effective work so their learning is purposeful and they take ownership of moving it forward
- ensuring teachers check the contribution to learning by additional adults.

■ Improve the impact of subject leadership by:

- widening the range of evidence used to check the quality of provision
- ensuring development priorities are more comprehensive and are sharply focused so work to achieve them can be evaluated.

I hope 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 under the URN for your school. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

**Stephen Long**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**