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Mrs C Ryding
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Ryding

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 19 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 including one in Reception class.

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

Achievement in art, craft and design

Achievement in art, craft and design is satisfactory.

- From broadly average starting points in Reception, children make good progress in their creative development and their achievements are at least in line with national expectations by the time they enter Year 1.
- They learn to draw confidently using a range of markers and successfully manipulate a wide range of tools. For example, when using scissors skilfully to make a bear's bed or adeptly fashioning clay models of a bear's cave.
- Pupils make satisfactory progress throughout Key Stages 1 and 2. Recent monitoring information, evidence from sketchbooks and examples of pupils' work show their achievements are generally average by the end of Year 6.

- Careful deployment of, and good support from adults, helps all pupils take a full part in lessons and, as a result, pupils who have particular difficulties with aspects of the subject make similar progress to their peers.

Quality of teaching in art, craft and design

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

- Teachers have been energised by the developing creative curriculum and are enthusiastic in their teaching. Their enthusiasm is infectious and pupils say they really enjoy the subject.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary and they apply themselves eagerly to their work. In Key Stages 1 and 2, from often similar starting points, they are encouraged to think creatively and develop their own responses using a satisfactory range of materials, tools and equipment.
- Opportunities for the mainly non-specialist staff to work alongside visiting artists and craftworkers are building teachers' skills and knowledge in the subject effectively.
- Teachers' oral feedback in lessons is regular and, together with comments in sketchbooks, helps pupils to understand how well they are doing. However, the use and value of sketchbooks are inconsistent.
- Regular formal assessment of pupils' work is developing but not yet embedded. Consequently, teachers do not always use their knowledge of pupils' prior skills and abilities to plan lessons. This means that the work at times is too easy for some or not stretching enough for others; leading to satisfactory rather than good progress.

Quality of the curriculum in art, craft and design

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

- In Reception class, good links are made between children's creative development and other areas of learning; with a successful balance of child-initiated and adult-led creative tasks that children tackle with gusto.
- The school places a high value on developing opportunities for pupils to access first-hand experiences. This is achieved through a satisfactory range of two- and three-dimensional activities, a range of visits out of school and visiting artists and craftworkers into school. However, leaders know that visits out are not always capitalised on as well as they could be and plans are in place to improve this.
- The use of information and communication technology in the subject is developing well and pupils report eagerly on the range of art packages they are accomplished in using.
- Pupils' knowledge and understanding of the work of artists and craftworkers from different times and cultures are satisfactory and improving. Year 6 pupils talked enthusiastically to their partners about the qualities of artists' work they chose to research and their own work

developed in a similar style. However, the range of materials available for pupils to use was limited.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in art, craft and design

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

- Since your arrival in September, the profile of the subject has been raised and has been placed at the heart of the curriculum, to raise aspirations and achievement in this subject and others.
- The subject coordinator's regular evaluation of the subject, through observation of teaching, review of planning and pupils' work, means that you both have a very clear view of the strengths and areas that need to improve. Plans are well advanced to improve weaker areas, including teachers' better use of sketchbooks and assessment of pupils' work.
- The subject leader works effectively with staff to share ideas for teaching. Opportunities to learn from professionals or colleagues in other schools are developing, particularly through the visiting artists and craftworkers and partnership with local Catholic secondary schools.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- raising standards and achievements in the subject further by:
 - widening the range of resources from which children can choose to develop their ideas
 - ensuring art, craft and design opportunities are incorporated into the planning of school visits, where appropriate
 - improving the use of sketchbooks
 - embedding the developing assessment procedures across the school so that lessons always take account of pupils' various starting points.

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