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Mr J Crane
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Crane

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 8 June 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 three 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's skills, knowledge and understanding are generally at expectations when they start school except in drawing which is markedly poorer than other aspects of their creative development. By the time they leave Reception they have made good progress with almost all children working securely within the early learning goals. This proportion is above the national average. Children's drawing improves by the end of Reception but their observational skills are underdeveloped. The children explore and manipulate tools and materials with confidence producing increasingly original outcomes.
- Pupils progress satisfactorily between Year 1 and Year 5. Attainment meets national expectations for the majority and some exceed them. In

Year 6 attainment improves strongly where excellent specialist teaching promotes pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding exceptionally well. As one articulate Year 6 pupil aptly explained, 'Our teacher moves us further on in the subject because he has such a passion for it.' Even so, pupils are still not reaching their full potential because of their moderate progress prior to Year 6.

- Pupils develop sufficient visual literacy to communicate opinions and preferences when studying a fairly narrow range of artists, designers and craftspeople. The oldest pupils evaluate their work proficiently orally and in writing because they have regular practice.
- The quality of pupils' drawing is variable. Some set pieces are sophisticated but work in sketchbooks is generally of mediocre quality. Painting develops satisfactorily and shows progression year on year.
- Pupils' behave very well and apply themselves diligently in lessons. Behaviour in Year 6 is outstanding with pupils demonstrating independence, responsibility and maturity in tackling their work and setting up their workspaces.

Quality of teaching in art, craft and design

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

- Teaching seen during the visit was good. It was outstanding in Year 6 where specialist subject knowledge promotes first-hand experiences, provides visually exciting resources and demonstration is skilled. Outcomes sampled across the school indicate that over time teaching is at least satisfactory and good in some respects. Pupils are interested, enjoy the subject and make satisfactory progress as a result.
- In Reception, children readily engage in a full range of creative activities supported with a thoughtful and unobtrusive level of guidance and intervention provided by adults. Some of the outcomes show originality as a result.
- Lessons are planned satisfactorily with good organisation and management of resources. Teachers plan a succession of preparatory work before pupils attempt a finished piece.
- Assessment practice is work in progress. The school is trialling different approaches to decide on a sustainable approach. Teachers assess pupils' work during the year against National Curriculum levels. However, moderation is not yet carried out to ensure that judgements are accurate.
- In some classes the particular needs of individuals who are potentially more vulnerable are not always catered for sufficiently through adaptation of the curriculum or adjustment on the spot by supporting adults.
- Relationships between pupils and staff are very secure promoting a calm and inclusive atmosphere conducive to productive learning.

Quality of the curriculum in art, craft and design

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

- The curriculum enables teachers and learners to meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and the National Curriculum.
- Provision in Reception is good with plentiful opportunities for children to pursue appealing creative activities that develop their imagination. They play energetically, for example, in the make-believe airport, packing suitcases for an imaginary holiday and checking in their luggage at the desk. They sing with gusto, work with sustained attention making models, learn new ways of printing, painting, drawing, mark making and explore a wide range of materials. The teacher has identified that outcomes are more individual and creative when there is no preconceived idea of the outcome. She plans to prepare more open-ended, challenging activities to move provision to the next level.
- Pupils' progress is structured sufficiently. They learn about a range of processes and materials used in art. Textiles and 3-dimensional work is not taught as regularly as other processes and outcomes are generally unadventurous.
- Effective links are made with other subjects that bring relevance and a sense of purpose to art studies.
- Provision for gifted and talented pupils is good. Inter-school workshops are hosted and led by a subject specialist enabling talented pupils from different schools to share ideas and work collaboratively.
- Links with schools abroad are strengthened through the subject. Visiting pupils from France, who spoke very little English, worked in partnership with Rolph pupils designing and painting huge banner boards depicting their different cultures.
- The locality is underused as a resource for drawing on location and for making links with local artists and craft workers to enrich the curriculum.
- 'Off curriculum' days are enjoyed by staff and pupils who have a particular interest. Pupils self-select the art and design option and work for a full day in mixed-age groups enabling them to explore a technique in depth.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in art, craft and design

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

- You and the subject leader have high expectations to raise the subject's profile and to raise achievement. New to post, following a shuffle of subject leaders in the school, the subject leader shows enthusiasm and determination to make improvements, and quickly.
- The subject leader demonstrates outstanding subject knowledge and practice but does not have enough opportunity to share it with others through demonstration or joint-teaching. Nonetheless, his skilful,

innovative teaching is a shining example of excellence for others to emulate.

- A plan is in place to develop the subject. Even so, it is not focused sufficiently on outcomes with a clear link to the school's development plan.
- Quality assurance activities are too random. There is no systematic approach that includes regular observations of teaching.
- Collections of work that show progression in different processes for staff to refer to are underway. They are not yet annotated to provide additional guidance to explain the levels attained.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- Raise standards in drawing by:
 - teaching pupils how to look and develop their skills in studying natural and manufactured objects critically
 - improving pupils' use of sketchbooks
 - ensuring that teachers recognise progression and know which skills and techniques to teach next.
- Develop curriculum enrichment and ensure that it meets the needs of potentially vulnerable pupils by:
 - adapting curriculum planning appropriately to support individual needs
 - arranging visits to galleries and opportunities for pupils to work alongside contemporary artists and local experts
 - extending pupils' knowledge and understanding of different artists, designers and craftworkers from different times, countries and cultures
- Developing a systematic approach to monitoring and evaluation that focuses on the impact of teaching on learning outcomes.

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

Linda Killman
Her Majesty's Inspector