

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



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Mrs B Salamonczyk
Headteacher
St Benedict's Roman Catholic Primary School
Lambourn Way
Chatham
Medway
ME5 8PU

Dear Mrs Salamonczyk

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 7 October 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 six lessons.

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

Achievement in art, craft and design

Achievement in art, craft and design is good.

- Children's creative development is in line with that expected when they join the Reception class. Boys and girls enjoy the good range of activities offered, making good progress and laying firm foundations for later study.
- Between Years 1 and 6, pupils' good progress continues and both boys' and girls' attainment is above that seen nationally when they leave. In lessons pupils are keen to learn. They enjoy developing individual ideas in response to starting points. On some occasions, they are not clear enough about what they are aiming to achieve so as to fully realise their ideas.
- Pupils learn well how to exploit key processes such as drawing, when working from observation, imagination and memory. They make good

progress in learning to handle different media confidently when drawing and in other processes such as mixed media and three-dimensional work.

- Regular reference to the work of other creative practitioners is valued by pupils. They develop good skills in interpreting what they see and using the outcomes to support their own work. This is especially so where they see work at first hand, such as when artists work in school.

Quality of teaching of art, craft and design

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

- Teachers approach lessons with enthusiasm and work hard to prepare materials and activities. They work effectively with the subject leader, who also contributes to the teaching in each class, to plan lessons and projects.
- Lessons are well managed and activities are enjoyable. Teachers are not afraid to use a wide range of approaches, including big and potentially messy work, including mod-roc and collage. Activities are well structured with good opportunities for discussion and well-paced practical work.
- In most lessons teachers confidently demonstrate practical tasks and introduce pupils to work by other creative practitioners. Sketchbooks are used effectively with pupils to explore processes, for example drawing, and to model the research and growth of ideas. Feedback and marking in sketchbooks do not always give enough guidance for improvement.
- Pupils have challenging long-term goals. Teachers have a good awareness of each pupil's attainment. They plan lessons which build effectively on pupils' prior learning. However, they do not always tailor activities, including questioning, well enough to help individual pupils understand precisely what to do to fulfil their individual potential.

Quality of the curriculum in art, craft and design

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

- From the Reception class onwards, pupils are introduced to a wide range of processes and techniques for both two- and three-dimensional work, including the creative use of computers. These are planned thoughtfully to ensure that their skills and knowledge are extended and reinforced over time.
- Pupils enjoy the themes underpinning their work. These include reference to unique features such as the 'Forest School' and to the local area. The school is moving toward more cross-curricular learning overall. It is well focused on forming connections between art, craft and design and other subjects. These are not yet secure but initial links are welcomed by pupils.
- Staff take good steps to enrich the curriculum by helping pupils to enter local competitions and participate regularly in festivals. These involve them in large-scale collaborative work such as masks made for a carnival.
- Pupils' experiences are augmented by exposure to creative practitioners working in school and by visits to places of interest. This does much to

broaden their cultural knowledge and understanding. However, pupils have relatively few opportunities to visit galleries and see a range of work, including contemporary practice, in the setting for which it was made.

Effectiveness of leadership and management of art, craft and design

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

- The subject leader makes effective use of her well-developed subject knowledge to move the subject forward and support her colleagues. Strong teamwork means there is a shared vision and an aspiration to support the pupils in a subject they clearly enjoy.
- Curriculum development is innovative, for example with staff encouraged to try new approaches as the cross-curricular links emerge. Good use is made of local resources, such as a secondary school art department, to offer specialist teaching for pupils and to widen staff understanding.
- The subject leader works well with her colleagues to support their teaching. She uses a good range of monitoring techniques, including work scrutiny, analysis of assessment data and pupil discussion, to evaluate the quality of learning. However, she has too few opportunities to observe lessons so as to refine her awareness of what could be improved.
- Strategic planning is ambitious for improvement. The goals link logically to issues emerging from subject evaluation but stated targets are not always measurable enough so that the impact can be checked.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- widening pupils' experiences further by giving them more opportunities to visit galleries and see creative practice in its intended setting
- refining teaching by ensuring that it gives pupils a better understanding of how to move their work forward to reach their individual targets
- increasing the impact of subject leadership by enabling observation of teaching to identify weaker practice, and ensuring that subject development goals are measurable so the impact on achievement can be checked.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop art, craft and design in the school.

As 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. A copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Long
Her Majesty's Inspector