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Mr J Moynihan  
Headteacher  
St Mary's CofE Primary School  
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Dear Mr Moynihan

### **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 24 November 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 good.

#### **Achievement in art, craft and design**

Achievement in art, craft and design is good.

- In the Early Years Foundation Stage outstanding provision promotes children's creative development exceptionally well ensuring that they make more than expected progress. Children immerse themselves in exciting creative activities indoors and outside, that they relish.
- Good transition arrangements secure pupils' transition from Reception into Year 1 where they continue to combine their creative skills and imagination and practise skills that they have learnt previously.
- Good-quality work on display and in pupils sketchbooks show that in Key Stages 1 and 2 pupils make effective use of materials, processes and techniques to communicate their ideas in drawing. Achievement by the end of Year 6 is good.

- In lessons, all groups of pupils work productively, with perseverance and concentration to make good progress. They are responsive to support and advice from staff. They reflect on their work and are proficient in evaluating it. They work safely and organise their work spaces effectively sharing equipment and tools cooperatively.
- Pupils enjoy the subject and refer to artists' work that they have studied in discussions about their work. They are not as accomplished at talking about what they think and feel about 3D processes as they are in commenting on two-dimensional work.

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

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

- Curriculum planning is based securely on pupils' prior learning. Learning is placed in context, usually linked to a topic or theme, so that pupils understand its relevance and purpose. The impact on their motivation to learn is strong.
- Teaching is confident, drawing on good subject knowledge that challenges and entuses pupils. Imaginative use of resources, including information and communication technology, contributes to pupils' good progress.
- Activities are challenging but do not always provide enough scope for rigorous experimentation prior to embarking on a final piece.
- Good use is made of assessment to monitor pupils' ongoing progress including evaluation of their work in sketchbooks. Teachers observe and listen to pupils during lessons adapting planning on the spot in response to their assessments. Written comments are useful and developmental but sometimes intrusive in where they are placed on pupils' work. Teachers have a good understanding of individual pupils' achievement. However, this valuable information is not summarised against National Curriculum targets at the end of each year.

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

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

- Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding as a result of excellent planning that is adapted daily on the basis of adults' refined assessments of children's needs, abilities and interests.
- The National Curriculum programme of study is well-organised and ensures that pupils are taught knowledge and skills systematically over time.
- Pupils are introduced to new and sometimes specialised techniques, such as batik, at timely intervals so that learning is fresh and challenging.
- Sketchbooks are used well to compile visual information and help pupils with the development of their ideas.

- The school has revised the curriculum to ensure that it is relevant, reflects pupils' interests and makes maximum use of the school's unique setting. For example, Forest School experiences provide pupils with experience of drawing on location and using natural resources to make art. These and other memorable experiences at clubs, community events and focused curriculum days contribute well to pupils' development and well-being.
- Pupils make a valuable contribution to the community through the subject making crafts for sale at the Christmas Fayre and through the art for Afghan project, which is particularly pertinent to those pupils living at the military base with family members serving in the armed forces.
- Pupils visit galleries and museums but have more limited experience of working alongside living artists and craftworkers drawn from the immediate community and beyond.

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

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

- The leadership of art, craft and design is strongly-focused on learning and outcomes. A common sense of purpose exists among staff to provide meaningful, relevant and exciting experiences to promote good learning and to nurture pupils' enjoyment of the subject.
- Quality assurance procedures are comprehensive and provide the school with an accurate view of strengths and weaknesses. However, opportunities are missed to evaluate attainment against national standards so that data can be used to inform strategic planning.
- The subject leader is ambitious for the subject and innovative, for example, in trialling a case study of a vulnerable pupil involving detailed observations and assessment to identify how the subject can be utilised as a potential starting point in other subjects.
- A range of specialist expertise exists within the staff which is tapped into skilfully contributing to the school's good provision.

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

- increasing opportunities for pupils to explore three-dimensional media and work collaboratively on a large scale
- summarising pupils' achievement against National Curriculum targets and using this information to inform strategic planning for the subject
- making links with artists, designers and craftworkers to extend pupils' experience of working alongside contemporary practitioners.

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

**Linda Killman**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**