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Mrs K Baptiste
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Baptiste

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 26 January 2012 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 analysis of pupils' work; review of documentation; discussions with staff and pupils, observation of a children's assembly utilising the performing and creative arts, and observation of four lessons, including two lessons observed jointly with you.

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

Achievement in art, craft and design

Achievement in art, craft and design is satisfactory and improving.

- Children's creative development is generally below average on entry into Reception class. Improvements to Early Years Foundation Stage provision since the previous inspection enable children to make good progress and by the time they reach Year 1 their achievements are at least average. Children's curiosity, confidence and perseverance skills develop well, which prepares them effectively for their future work in the subject.
- Until recently, pupils' progress in the subject during Key Stages 1 and 2 has been satisfactory. The new creative curriculum with art, craft and design at

its heart is making a positive difference to pupils' progress in lessons but has yet to impact on better outcomes by the end of Year 6.

- Pupils' confidence in mark making, designing, exploring materials, using digital media and expressing ideas visually and orally is developing well; in part due to the school's recent focus on developing independent, creative and resilient learners.

Quality of teaching in art, craft and design

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

- Teachers have fully embraced changes to the way the subject is taught, are energised by them and transmit their enthusiasm well.
- In all lessons, excellent relationships between adults and pupils support pupils' exemplary behaviour and attitudes. All pupils are encouraged to plan and develop their own ideas and to choose materials or media that suit their ideas best; including using computers.
- Careful teaching of skills and teachers' use of a range of artefacts and visual stimuli promote pupils' confidence, creativity and decision making successfully.
- Homework is used to develop pupils' ideas, explore new artists well and to involve parents in their children's artistic and creative development.
- Teachers' ongoing oral assessment in lessons helps pupils to reflect on their work and consider how well they are doing. Pupils speak positively about how they are encouraged to evaluate their own and others' work and say they find comments helpful in moving their ideas forward. Formal assessment procedures are developing but have yet to be fully embedded.

Quality of the curriculum in art, craft and design

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

- Changes to the curriculum, alongside good use of the immediate and local area and the vast range of visits out of school; to national museums, galleries, the design centre and specific exhibitions, ensure a broad and rich curriculum that has something to excite and interest everyone. Every topic includes a visit to stimulate and challenge pupils.
- Progression ladders and curriculum maps make sure a wide range of two- and three-dimensional experiences are planned progressively.
- Pupils report positively on the changes to the subject and value the opportunities to be involved in the development of the art-focused activities within their topics. They also say that they appreciate the flexibility of approach so they do not have to complete things in a hurry.
- Pupils speak proudly of the vibrant displays that showcase their work across the school. They particularly like the times when they have Art-weeks and Theme-weeks where they take part in a wide range of activities and when new skills are taught and unusual materials and media explored.

- The school has a strong commitment to its religious identity, literacy and imagery, and pupils have many opportunities to develop their ideas and explore symbolism and meaning in religious art, iconography, architecture and through observation of the wide variety of decorated crosses within the school community.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in art, craft and design

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

- Leadership of the subject is shared among the senior leadership team successfully to ensure that it sits at the heart of the creative curriculum.
- Through effective monitoring and evaluation strategies leaders know what is working well and what could be better. They are taking action to improve weaker areas. For example, to make sure pupils' skills are being built on from their individual starting points more successfully, progression ladders have been developed to monitor individual pupils' achievements and to plan their next steps. This is contributing to more regular formal assessments of pupils' work.
- Staff keep up to date with initiatives in the subject through their many visits to galleries and new exhibitions and from sharing the good practice in school; a number of teachers have specialism in the subject.
- Leaders are aware that more could be done to learn from the best practice available and from more opportunities for pupils and staff to work with, and learn from, contemporary artists and craftworkers.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- embedding the formal assessment procedures currently being developed more fully across the school
- extending opportunities for staff to learn from best practice and for teachers and pupils to work alongside, and learn from, contemporary artists and craftworkers.

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

Margaret Farrow
Her Majesty's Inspector