

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

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



8 February 2012

Mr N Hurn
Headteacher
Cardinal Hume Catholic School
Old Durham Road
Gateshead
Tyne and Wear
NE9 6RZ

Dear Mr Hurn

Ofsted subject survey inspection programme: art, craft and design

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and students during my visit with Margaret Farrow HMI on 11 and 12 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: discussions with senior staff, the subject leader and students; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of students' work; and observation of 15 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.

- Boys and girls develop positive attitudes in the subject. They work practically with confidence and show increasing independence. However, the purpose and meaning of their own work or understanding of other artists' are not always expressed explicitly. Students interviewed were keen to know how to pursue their enquiry, for example by visiting art galleries.
- Students make a good start in Year 7; their work is in line with standards attained nationally at that age. However, their progress across Key Stage 3 is satisfactory overall due in part to inconsistent use of sketchbooks to record, experiment, research, review, revisit and refine their work.
- A typical proportion of students take a qualification in the subject. They make good progress, attaining above average standards at GCSE and in

BTEC courses. Two-dimensional work is a strength, building on an area of earlier confidence, for example their bold mark-making using pen drawing.

- Sixth form students progress well on their A-level and BTEC courses. The diversity of their skills in using printmaking and digital technology to transform their ideas is a successful feature of their vocationally related work. Where students' ability to observe and experiment combine, their paintings are impressive. Three-dimensional work is less sophisticated.

Quality of teaching in art, craft and design

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

- The impact of teaching on students' achievement is a strength, underpinned by very good relationships between teachers and students, and between students. Where observed, learning support staff complemented the teachers' expertise well by promoting students' literacy.
- Staff use their good knowledge of assessment criteria effectively between Years 10 and 13 to support students' progress and achievement. However, assessment is used less informatively earlier on, for example to plan activities that challenge students with differing abilities equally well.
- The balance between classwork and individual support is successful. Demonstrations are managed well to make expectations clear. In one lesson observed, images of students' work created during the session promoted students' pride and clarified how to raise standards further.
- Staff maintain their own skills as artists. However, their creativity is not always applied to teaching for example, by transforming classrooms into environments that add to students' learning. Displays of artefacts that promote curiosity or resources organised to aid self-selection by students are underused approaches.

Quality of the curriculum in art, craft and design

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

- The high standards of painting attained, often inspired by the theme of identity, show what is possible when students are given regular opportunities to pursue skills and themes. However, progression is inconsistently planned across themes, two- and three-dimensional media.
- Vocational courses make good reference to the work of creative practitioners through 'live' projects that motivate students. By contrast, fine art courses make too little use of visits to art galleries or colleges, for example to inform students' work or decisions about future careers.
- Wide ranging examples of enrichment include work with visiting artists. Some initiatives have helped to fill gaps in students' experience, for example of textiles, ceramics or photography. However, the impact of these initiatives is limited by insufficient long-term planning.
- Projects that contribute to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development have similarly achieved impact that is not fully embedded.

For example, a project with a contemporary glassmaker to design stained glass for the chapel has unrealised potential to stimulate all students.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in art, craft and design

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

- Successful work between senior leaders, the subject leader and the architects of the new school has ensured that excellent facilities and high-quality resources are provided. The facilities are positioned to maximise impact across the school and a 'gallery' space' is beginning to evolve.
- The subject leader has established a tradition of high standards in relation to the teaching of painting. This provides a good example to colleagues that has underpinned a good track record of achievement. Nevertheless, the department's stated vision does not fully encapsulate their wider aims.
- A collegiate departmental approach has been successfully developed which students value. They enjoy the high level of consistency between teachers. Staff have contributed to the development of teaching in other subjects although networking with teachers of the subject externally is limited.
- The school has identified appropriate priorities to develop the subject further. However, improvement planning does not always make clear enough the reasons or evidence that has informed prioritisation. The delegation of vocational course development illustrates the value of designating roles to lead improvement and innovation.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- increasing the recruitment of boys and girls to the subject, supporting their achievement across two-, three-dimensional and digital media by:
 - developing a more comprehensive plan to promote progression
 - increasing opportunities for students to work at first hand by visiting art galleries or strategically with creative practitioners
 - using assessment information, particularly in Years 7 to 9, to ensure that students are equally challenged
 - developing a shared vision and implementation strategy that fully exploits the new facilities and capitalises on students' enthusiasm.

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

Ian Middleton
Her Majesty's Inspector