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Mrs K James
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs James

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 with Linda Killman HMI on 6 February 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: interviews with staff and pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of parts of nine lessons, including a joint observation with you.

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

Achievement in art, craft and design

Achievement in art, craft and design is good.

- From broadly typical starting points, children's creative development in the Reception Year is good and the great majority are working securely within the levels expected when starting Year 1. Boys and girls develop a strong enjoyment of visual arts activities in responding to the world around them.
- Between Years 1 and 6, pupils make good progress so their attainment is above that expected when they leave. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make progress in line with their peers, as do the above average proportion speaking English as an additional language.
- Pupils make outstanding progress in building skills in using materials and processes. By the end of Year 6, they use drawing, painting and mixed

media confidently, as well as making sensitive use of sculptural materials, for example in large willow structures for a local parade.

- Pupils make good progress in learning about the approaches of other creative practitioners to support their own work. They develop secure skills in critically analysing the work they encounter and particularly enjoy seeing it at first hand, such as during visits to museums.
- Pupils work hard in lessons so they are characterised by a studious atmosphere. They think carefully about how to improve their work but do not always develop sufficiently individual outcomes to fully explore their own creativity.

Quality of teaching in art, craft and design

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

- Teachers are enthusiastic about the subject, enjoy teaching it and pass their motivation on to pupils. They share their subject expertise effectively with each other so that teaching is consistently confident and draws on good subject knowledge to challenge and support pupils.
- Lessons are very carefully structured with well-managed sequences of discussion, work analysis and practical tasks. Positive relationships and social development are encouraged between pupils and with adults.
- Teachers make imaginative use of resources, including information and communication technology. For example, electronic whiteboards are used well to show images in lessons and a virtual learning environment enables pupils to comment on projects.
- Pupils' progress over time and in lessons is monitored carefully. Lesson activities are well planned to build learning overall and teachers support individual pupils through discussion. Some opportunities are missed to adjust tasks fully enough for different pupils so each reaches their full potential, and to allow enough flexibility so that each develops original work.
- Provision in the subjects for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is outstanding. High-quality one-to-one support, tailored to need, enables them to access the same learning as other pupils.
- Pupils make regular use of sketchbooks and find them useful in developing their ideas. Teachers' written comments in sketchbooks help move pupils on but do not always encourage sufficiently independent responses, and are sometimes intrusively placed on the work.

Quality of the curriculum in art, craft and design

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

- In the Reception Year, children benefit from an outstandingly wide range of activities to promote creative development. Planning is adapted effectively based on assessment of children's needs, abilities and interests.

- The programme of study for older pupils is very well organised to ensure that they encounter new knowledge and skills systematically over time. Units of work are evaluated regularly by staff and adapted to keep learning fresh, and to take account of pupils' interests and preferences. Pupils really enjoy the themes they study, which include links to the local area such as studying the work of artist Heath Robinson.
- Very strong consideration is given to developing pupils' understanding of formal visual elements such as line, tone and colour. They regularly return to these so as to reinforce and extend how they use them.
- Links with other subjects are explicit, logical and help pupils understand the relevance of the subject. For example, a current whole-school writing event is based on studying a painting by Paolo Uccello, and Year 6 pupils are linking mathematics learning to the work of Piet Mondrian.
- The first-hand study of artists, designers and craftworkers from different times, countries and cultures is well represented through regular gallery visits and visiting artists. The school is careful to reflect pupils' varied ethnic heritages, as evident in learning about Indian Rangoli patterns.
- Memorable experiences at clubs, community events and focused curriculum days contribute extremely well to pupils' subject achievement.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in art, craft and design

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

- Subject leadership makes a good impact on the subject, ensuring that it has a high profile in the school, as reflected in the high-quality displays and in the breadth of pupils' curriculum opportunities.
- Shared subject leadership across different phase-teams is effective in ensuring that staff are aware of current subject priorities and that monitoring subject effectiveness is consistent.
- Strategic planning links well to school-wide initiatives and includes accurately identified subject-specific areas for improvement. The high priority currently given to fostering pupils' individual creativity reflects an accurate awareness of the next steps for the subject.
- A wide range of monitoring activity, such as lesson observation and work scrutiny, gives subject leaders a good understanding of the progress being made. Nevertheless, the focus for monitoring is not always precise enough to check the impact of specific initiatives.
- Subject leaders are energetic in making external links. These benefit pupils through the visits they make, through the creative practitioners who work in school and in staff development carried out with external consultants.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- improving the impact of teaching on pupils' individual creativity by adjusting tasks more fully to meet their differing needs, and allowing them greater flexibility in the way they respond to starting points
- enhancing the effectiveness of subject leadership by ensuring that monitoring strategies always focus sharply on the actions designed to improve provision so that their impact can be checked and the next steps planned.

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

Yours sincerely

Stephen Long
Her Majesty's Inspector