

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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Ms J Harvey
Headteacher
Booth Wood Primary School
Old Ashby Road
Loughborough
LE11 4PG

Dear Ms Harvey

Ofsted 2011–12 subject survey inspection programme: art, craft and design

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 7 March 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 five lessons.

The overall effectiveness of art and design is satisfactory.

Achievement in art and design

Achievement in art and design is satisfactory.

- From starting points that are typically well below expectations, children in Reception make rapid progress in developing their creativity. They respond to a wide variety of sensory experiences confidently. The children draw, design and make imaginatively and with immense pleasure. By the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, the vast majority of children are working securely within the early learning goals. This prepares them well for their learning in Year 1.
- Between Years 1 and 6, most pupils make consistently satisfactory progress so their attainment is at the expected level when they leave. In all year groups pupils are generally working at age-related levels. Very few achieve above-average levels because the school's assessment practice

does not define the next steps required to accelerate the progress of more-able pupils.

- Pupils make satisfactory progress in building their skills in using materials and processes. However, their progress in drawing is better than in other processes. They draw regularly from memory, imagination and observation across all subjects in the curriculum. They learn to use techniques such as hatching and rubbing to create tonal effects or the principle of linear perspective to give their drawing three-dimensional depth.
- They talk and share their ideas about the work of artists, techniques and processes using an appropriate range of visual language.
- Pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) competently to explore design.
- In all classes, pupils work with enjoyment, commitment and perseverance. Relationships, behaviour and safety are good. They share work spaces, tools and materials amicably. For example, children in Reception making an imaginary planet together demonstrated courtesy and good manners in negotiating the use of boxes and cartons to create the landscape.

Quality of teaching in art and design

The quality of teaching in art and design is satisfactory.

- Lessons are organised well so that pupils can work productively. Teachers provide sufficient examples of artists' work to inspire and provoke thought. They demonstrate techniques confidently and use ICT proficiently.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is variable. Where it is secure, for example in Reception and Year 3, teachers are able to open up options as the lesson progresses to promote creativity and originality and allow for individual responses. Conversely, less-confident teaching leads to predictable outcomes.
- Teacher input at the start of lessons is sometimes too long. Objectives and criteria for success are communicated clearly. However, while intent on enabling pupils to achieve satisfactory end-products and reduce the possibility of mistakes, teaching sometimes limits opportunities for pupils to solve problems creatively and overcome potential barriers to success.
- Teachers are observant and assess how well pupils are progressing and adjusting the teaching if necessary or by re-visiting teaching points. They evaluate pupils' attainment and identify individuals performing above or below expectations. However, this information is not always used effectively in planning lessons to provide for differing abilities or needs.
- Additional adults provide suitable support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. However, difficult practical activities sometimes result in pupils' over-dependence on guidance and support.

Quality of the curriculum in art and design

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

- In the Reception Year, children benefit from a wide range of activities to promote creative development. Planning is adapted carefully, based on assessment of children's needs, abilities and interests. This year, a focus on developing child-led activities is having a positive impact on children's creative development with almost all children making impressive gains.
- Pupils enjoy the themes that they study. The curriculum for older pupils is well organised to ensure that they encounter new knowledge and skills systematically over time. However, it is not always adapted well enough to meet the needs of all pupils.
- Links with other subjects are explicit and help pupils understand the relevance of the subject. For example, in English, Year 5 pupils study Alfred Noyes' famous poem *The Highwayman* and learn how to use perspective in their drawings to depict horse and rider galloping into the distance.
- The study of artists, designers and craftworkers from different times, countries and cultures is particularly well represented through the school's exchanges of art work with its link-school in Bangladesh. Pupils have occasional opportunities to work alongside living artists, for example, to create a mural in the outdoor space. However, they rarely have opportunities to visit galleries.
- A range of clubs, community events and focused curriculum days makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in art and design

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

- The senior team and the subject leader are ambitious for the pupils and keen for them to achieve well. The subject leader devises an annual plan that is clearly focused on raising standards but with objectives that are too broad to achieve.
- Good leadership in the Early Years Foundation Stage ensures that all staff contribute to assessment practices and planning for creative development. Staff's individual skills and talents are used effectively to promote good-quality learning experiences for children.
- Adequate time is allocated for the subject leader to carry out monitoring and evaluation of the subject's effectiveness. This has included sampling of pupils' work in sketchbooks and displays and evaluation of assessment data. However, there is insufficient focus on developing teachers' expertise by observing lessons, giving helpful feedback and sharing good practice.
- Resources are well-organised, accessible and plentiful.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensure that pupils make consistently good progress from their starting points in Year 1 by:
 - using outcomes of assessment to define the next steps for pupils, especially those whose achievement is above or below expectations
 - ensuring that monitoring and evaluation include observations of teaching and learning at first hand so that good practice can be shared and training needs identified
 - allocating more time in lessons to creating and problem solving by reducing the length of introductions.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop art 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