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26 April 2012

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Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Molcher

Ofsted 2012–13 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 17 April 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 three lessons.

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

Achievement in art, craft and design

Achievement in art, craft and design is satisfactory.

- Reception-aged children make satisfactory progress from broadly typical starting points on entry. By the end of the year, their attainment is average. They draw, paint and create structures in two and three dimensions using different media and materials. Children show perseverance and determination, for example, in binding sticks together to make natural sculptures. They cooperate well with each other in pairs and groups.
- Steady progress continues through Key Stages 1 and 2. Finished pieces of art are generally at the level expected. However, few examples show adventurous and unique ways of responding to a similar starting point.

- Regular experiences in drawing from memory, imagination and observation help pupils' drawing to progress satisfactorily and contribute to their enjoyment of the subject. However, the quality of the work in their sketchbooks is too variable.
- Pupils develop a reasonable understanding of the work of artists, designers and craftworkers. With self-evaluation being a target for improvement this year, pupils are improving their skills in commenting thoughtfully on their own and others' work. However, some pupils are constrained by their limited repertoire of subject-specific language.
- Pupils are inspired by examples of work, expressing awe and wonder in their observations. Comments such as 'the colours are amazing' and 'look at the detail in the eye' are typical.

Quality of teaching in art, craft and design

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

- Pupils respond positively to teaching that is well organised and planned thoughtfully. Teachers are skilful in making activities relevant to pupils' interests and meaningful. They prepare pupils well for what is coming next so that they understand where the learning is leading.
- Lessons are tightly structured and do not allow for deviation from the plan. This results in broadly similar outcomes with few pupils taking risks or exploring the full potential of media and materials.
- Suitable examples are shared with pupils so that they have a clear understanding of what is expected. However, teaching does not always allow for, or encourage, enough diversity in the pupils' responses to a starting point.
- Teachers have adequate subject skills, knowledge and understanding to support learning. Assessment is regular and accurate. However, assessment information is not always used effectively for example, to devise activities with a higher level of challenge for the most able pupils.
- Relationships are good in all classes and teachers know their pupils well. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are supported well; tasks are adapted suitably so that they are able to participate fully in lessons.

Quality of the curriculum in art, craft and design

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

- In Reception and Year 1 children choose from a satisfactory range of activities to promote their creative development. They experience a broad range of natural and manufactured materials, tools and media so that their skills develop satisfactorily. Inside and outdoor learning is sometimes overly directed by adults so that freedom for creativity diminishes.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. A three-year cycle ensures that the National Curriculum is covered within fresh topics for pupils in mixed-age

classes. Pupils' views are sought and curriculum planning is adapted to accommodate their interests giving their learning relevance. Links with a school in Ghana provide pupils with insight into life in a different country and how this influences art from a different continent.

- The school involves pupils in local art projects providing them with wider experiences that the school would not otherwise be in a position to offer. For example, pupils worked with a local artist involved in an inter-faith project to decorate bags for artefacts and resources based on religious themes. Good use is made of local places of interest to inspire art projects such as the sculpture trail in Wellingborough.
- Art homework is used very well to encourage pupils to generate ideas and carry out research with their families at home. During the inspection, pupils were effusive about sculptures they had discovered on the internet during the holidays and were sharing them enthusiastically, explaining why they captured their interest. Parents and carers also contribute by running a popular knitting club.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in art, craft and design

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

- You provide a clear steer and professional development for the subject leader ensuring that the subject is led and managed satisfactorily. Teaching and attainment are at the forefront of developmental planning.
- The subject leader's confidence in leading the subject is growing steadily. Data are analysed effectively to evaluate standards and to identify pupils with special gifts and talents. Even so, activities for these pupils are not providing sufficient challenge for them in lessons to enable them to exceed typical standards. Nonetheless, the proportion of pupils reaching expected levels by the end of Year 6 has improved steadily over three years demonstrating satisfactory capacity for further improvement.
- Quality assurance practice is secure and provides suitable evidence for setting future priorities. For example, realising that progress is satisfactory rather than good, the current system for assessment is under review. The new format provides opportunity for pupils' progress to be monitored against the four strands of the National Curriculum enabling the school to identify areas of strength and weakness.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- accelerating pupils' progress to raise their attainment to above average levels by:
 - ensuring that pupils are encouraged to be more adventurous and creative in their responses to a given starting point
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to explore the full potential of media, tools and materials

- planning activities that challenge and extend the most able pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding
- setting clear and consistent expectations for the quality of pupils' work in their sketchbooks.

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