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Mrs C Whiteley
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Whiteley

Ofsted 2012–13 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 24 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.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included: interviews with staff and pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of seven 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.

- From below average starting points, children make good progress in their creative development during their first two years so that the great majority are working at the expected level when starting Year 1. Both boys and girls build strong enjoyment of exploring key processes such as drawing.
- Progress and enjoyment continue to be good between Years 1 and 6 so that pupils' attainment is above the national average when they leave. Pupils of different ethnic heritage make equally good progress, as do boys and girls. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make equal progress to others, and show equally high levels of enjoyment.
- Pupils develop good control of materials and processes, such as different types of paint, mixed-media and clay. They work well on small- and large-scale pieces and in collaborative tasks, reflecting their good behaviour.

- Learning about other creative practitioners' work is valued highly by pupils and used well to support their own work. Pupils effectively use what they learn to stimulate their own creativity, rather than making pastiches. For example, Year 4 pupils made computer-based pieces inspired by Cubism.
- Pupils think hard about refining their work, using sketchbooks well to explore ideas. In most lessons, they have a very clear understanding of what they are trying to achieve and make informed decisions about how to improve. In a small minority of lessons this is less evident and the pace of learning slackens.

Quality of teaching of art, craft and design

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

- Teachers are committed to the subject and work well as a team to prepare projects and lessons. They are enthusiastic in their teaching, a feature noted by pupils. The school environment reflects the excitement around visual learning with high-quality displays much in evidence.
- Introductions to technical processes and the work of creative practitioners are usually delivered well by teachers in lessons. These are augmented by high-quality teaching from a specialist in the school's ceramics room, as well as input from artists about their work and from gallery and museum staff on the regular visits which take place.
- Teachers confidently structure lessons to provide good opportunities for discussion and practical work. They make innovative use of spaces like the hall, corridors and playground to work on a large scale where appropriate. Good teamwork between teachers and additional staff helps ensure that pupils' behaviour is managed well in lessons, and that disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are well supported.
- Staff have high expectations of pupils and provide activities with good overall challenge. Support is tailored well around pupils' varied ability, with outstanding practice seen in the Nursery class where tasks were finely tuned to individual children's needs. In other years some opportunities are missed to adapt tasks fundamentally to challenge pupils of differing ability and to ensure that they all understand what is expected of them.

Quality of the curriculum in art, craft and design

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

- The thematic curriculum, developed from the start of this academic year, makes a strong contribution to subject learning. Pupils value the links with other curriculum areas as adding relevance to what they do. For example Year 6 found out much about Chinese culture by studying its pottery, and Year 3 enjoyed learning about South America while making masks.
- Pupils benefit from outstanding enrichment of subject learning by visiting local places of interest such as Kew Gardens, and working from the area around the school. Staff are alert to widening pupils' subject experiences,

such as by inviting artists from a local cooperative to talk about their work and how they make a living as artists.

- Good links are made to celebrate pupils' varied ethnic heritage. Year 2 pupils went to see Indian artefacts in the nearby Horniman Museum on the day of this inspection, and Year 4 had made prints based on British fashion.
- The curriculum provides good opportunities for pupils to explore two- and three-dimensional approaches covering art, craft and design disciplines. Unusually in a primary school, pupils have use of a dedicated ceramics room, gaining wider experience than in most schools of clay-work.
- Pupils' experiences are well planned to build skills logically over time. For example they learn new clay handling skills as they move up through the school, and reinforce key areas such as drawing in each project. Visual elements such as line and colour are securely mapped into the curriculum.
- The art club provides a good opportunity for pupils to develop their work further, with pupils noting the opportunity to explore individual work as something they value highly.

Effectiveness of leadership and management of art, craft and design

The leadership and management of art, craft and design are good.

- The subject leader is passionate about the subject and its development. She works well with senior leaders to sustain its high profile in the school.
- Effective planning with staff enables good development of their skills and identification of training needs. The subject leader is skilled at helping staff to take the initiative and not be afraid to try new approaches in teaching.
- Planning with her colleagues and scrutiny of pupil outcomes, gives the subject leader a good awareness of strengths and weaknesses in provision, which is used well to plan improvements. However, there are too few opportunities for her to observe teaching directly so as to provide feedback to staff and improve their teaching further.
- The subject leader is energetic in making use of external networks and support. She works hard to keep her own knowledge and skills up-to-date, and to refer colleagues to useful resources such as exhibitions, or to broker connections such as with a local artists' group.
- The subject leader has risen well to the challenge of ensuring good progression in pupils' skills through the thematic curriculum. Good use is made of assessment information to identify and support any pupils not reaching at least the expected level, but assessment data are underused to monitor the impact of provision as a whole, for example the progress made in different year groups, so as to identify potential improvements.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- increasing further the impact of teaching by ensuring that in all lessons:
 - - tasks are finely tuned to fully challenge pupils of differing ability
 - pupils know what to do to achieve well so they take the initiative and sustain a rapid pace for learning
- enabling subject leadership to make even greater impact by:
 - carrying out observations of lessons so as to sharpen feedback to staff
 - making more use of assessment data to monitor and improve provision.

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

Stephen Long
Her Majesty's Inspector