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4 May 2012

Ms M van Bochove
Acting Headteacher
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Dear Ms van Bochove

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 23 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 four 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.

- Children's creative development is good in the Reception class so the large majority reach or exceed the levels expected when joining Year 1. Boys and girls enjoy creative activities, building a good basis for later learning.
- Progress between Years 1 and 6 is satisfactory and pupils' attainment is in line with that seen nationally when they leave the school. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make equal progress to others.
- Pupils make good progress in learning to handle different materials and techniques, such as a variety of types of paint and different ways to draw.
- They make satisfactory progress in learning about work by other creative practitioners. Where they develop a good understanding of how the work

was made, and for what purpose, the impact is good, but on occasion their understanding is too superficial to fully support their own creativity.

- Reflection and refinement rightly form a regular element of pupils' subject learning and most are keen to think hard about how to improve their work. However, they are not always clear enough about the features of high-quality outcomes so as to move their own work forward rapidly.

Quality of teaching of art, craft and design

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

- Teachers are enthusiastic in their subject teaching and work hard to prepare resources and ideas.
- Classrooms are well managed and relationships between staff and pupils are good. This means pupils get to work quickly, use potentially messy materials carefully and learn to take responsibility for their work.
- Teachers accurately assess pupils' attainment and make satisfactory use of this information to plan activities. However, it is only in the Reception class that tasks are tailored finely so as to meet individual children's needs well and ensure that they all make good progress.
- Staff take satisfactory steps to share learning objectives with pupils so they understand what to do. While some introductions to practical tasks and the work of creative practitioners are good, some are less effective in communicating key messages and ensuring that pupils know how to complete work to a high standard.
- Regular dialogue between staff and pupils is a valuable feature of lessons, with individual discussions and talk-partners often making a good impact. Staff miss some opportunities to tackle common misunderstandings and share emerging good work so as to exemplify how to achieve well.
- Additional adults make a good contribution to supporting pupils' behaviour and a satisfactory contribution to their learning. On occasion they are not clear enough about pupils' targets to ensure that they make good progress.

Quality of the curriculum in art, craft and design

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

- Pupils have good opportunities to explore different materials, techniques and processes. They receive regular experience of traditional media such as paint as well as emerging media, for example computers. They respond well to collaborative work, evident in large pieces made for a carnival.
- The curriculum is well planned to include fine-art, craft and design disciplines, and to revisit key processes like drawing so as to build pupils' skills. Three-dimensional work is well represented within younger pupils' experiences, but less well developed for older pupils.
- Pupils encounter a good range of work by other creative practitioners. This includes historic and contemporary references, and involves some makers

living locally and who have children at the school. Such experiences offer valuable direct contact with creative practice.

- Subject study is integrated effectively into the wider curriculum through themed projects. These have been refined over time and appeal well to all pupils. Connections are especially strong with the school's location, such as through work involving landscape stimulated by a nearby nature trail.
- Pupils value enrichment opportunities such as workshops at a nearby secondary school for those identified as gifted, and an after-school club.
- Innovative steps are being taken to ensure that pupils are aware of contemporary creative practice in other countries and communities. For example, there is a growing partnership with a school in Malawi.

Effectiveness of leadership and management of art, craft and design

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

- Subject leadership has been effective in developing the contribution of the subject in the curriculum over time, and responding to the challenge resulting from the school's small size, where all staff lead several areas of work.
- Subject monitoring involves a satisfactory range of planning and work scrutiny, together with analysis of assessment information. This gives the subject leader a sound awareness of strengths and areas for improvement from which to plan subject development.
- Staff are supported effectively in their curriculum planning. For example, in identifying suitable links to the work of creative practitioners, and planning how to introduce practical tasks to pupils.
- Satisfactory steps are taken to develop the quality of subject teaching and share good practice. Nevertheless, the subject leader has too few opportunities to observe subject teaching so as to sharply identify weaknesses, use this to focus staff development and check the impact.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- increasing the impact of subject leadership on teaching through more regular monitoring of subject teaching to sharpen the planning of staff development and check that it makes the intended difference
- improving pupils' progress in Years 1 to 6 by ensuring that teachers always:
 - provide challenging activities in lessons for pupils of differing ability
 - ensure that pupils understand the characteristics of high-quality work so they can be more independent in moving their own work forward
 - make use of in-class assessment to identify and tackle any misconceptions, and to share high-quality practice.

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