

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



17 May 2012

Mrs H Springett
Headteacher
Winchcombe Abbey CofE Primary
Back Lane
Winchcombe
Cheltenham
GL54 5PZ

Dear Mrs Springett

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 9 May 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, pupils, and a member of the governing body; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of four 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.

- Children's level of creative development is generally below expectations on entry to Reception. They exceed expected progress from their starting points. When they move into Year 1, almost all children have reached the early goals for creative development.
- Through Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils continue to make good progress. By the end of Year 6, attainment is securely average for the majority and above for the remainder. Pupils' drawing and painting skills, as the school rightly acknowledges, are not as advanced as they are in other processes particularly those that are craft-based such as felt-making, ceramics and batik. They are not

using sketchbooks consistently well to help bring their drawing skills up to the high standards attained in other disciplines.

- Pupils are keen to learn about different cultures and are secure in their knowledge and understanding of similarities and differences. They communicate well their ideas about art, craft and design from a suitable range of places, religions and cultures found in the locality and abroad. Reception-aged children showed appreciation for the pattern work in examples of African batik that inspired their own designs.
- Pupils use computer software adeptly to manipulate images and explore design. They use digital photography in the same way as artists to inspire their starting points and to record processes.
- The subject develops pupils' behaviour and understanding of safety extremely well. For example, in the forest school Year 5 pupils demonstrated high levels of independence and were extremely careful not to intrude on others' chosen work spaces. Two pupils explained confidently why Year 6 pupils use hot wax and dye in the batik process while Reception children use flour and water paste before applying fabric paint.

Quality of teaching in art, craft and design

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

- Confident teaching inspires and motivates pupils with thoughtful use of resources and a good range of teaching styles and repertoire to capture and sustain pupils' interest. For example, in a Year 1 lesson pupils explored the way that light and shadow fall on objects. They painted planes of light and shade in an ambience of calm and tranquillity created with a darkened room lit by natural candlelight and spotlights.
- Assessment is regular and accurate. Teachers are vigilant in evaluating pupils' work during lessons. Teaching assistants provide timely support knowing when to intervene and when to allow pupils to work independently. However, assessment information is not always used effectively to finely tune activities so that alternatives are available for the few pupils in lessons who find some tasks too challenging.
- Good teaching, positive relationships and excellent modelling promote pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development strongly through the subject enabling pupils to work collaboratively and appreciate, for example, the beauty of nature and care for the environment. Pupils are proud to showcase their work and explain its purpose because teaching builds their self-confidence impressively.

Quality of the curriculum in art, craft and design

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

- Inside the classroom and outdoors children in Reception choose from a wide and varied selection of activities that promotes their creative development and fires their imagination.
- The curriculum has outstanding breadth and includes exploration of a very wide range of processes and crafts often led by specialists, artists, designers and craftspeople.
- Pupils' views are sought. Pupils contribute to curriculum planning by making suggestions about what they would like to experience while taking into account the requirements of the National Curriculum programme of study.
- The school is situated on a designated site of antiquity and historical relevance. Many lasting pieces of art within the school depict a sense of time and place which pupils explain eloquently. Exquisite mosaic installations using reclaimed ceramics were made by pupils while working with Cleo Mussi, an artist of national and international distinction. These depict key features of the school and the local church to mark the millennium when it moved to its new premises and merged the existing infant and junior schools. Another portrays Katharine Parr who lived in nearby Sudeley Castle where pupils are working with an artist in residence to create an installation within the grounds.
- Visits to places of interest such as the Pitt Rivers museum in Oxford and the Cheltenham art gallery promote pupils' interest in the subject and inspire observational drawings. Sewing, rag rug and knitting clubs provide pupils with tasters in what can be achieved using textiles.
- Pupils make a valuable contribution to communities at home and abroad making felt bunting for community Jubilee celebrations, exhibiting their work in the local delicatessen, knitting blankets and selling their art work for charity. They are keen participants in a plentiful range of local and national art events such as Face Britain where all pupils have submitted a self-portrait online to celebrate Her Majesty The Queen's Diamond Jubilee.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in art, craft and design

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

- The subject has a high profile within the school and key leaders and managers communicate their ambition for its ongoing development and improvement effectively, for example, in applying for Artsmark accreditation.
- Data are collected through regular assessment opportunities and analysed effectively to evaluate standards. Even so, as the school acknowledges, all teachers' understanding of progression in drawing and painting is not as secure as it should be to help them guide pupils towards improvement confidently.
- Quality assurance is effective and provides the school with an accurate view of its strengths and areas for development. However, opportunities for the subject leader to observe teaching at first hand so that training needs can be identified are limited.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- raising standards from average to above for the majority of pupils in drawing and painting by:
 - improving teachers' understanding of progression so that they are able to adapt or extend activities to suit the varying abilities of pupils and provide effective guidance and support to develop their skills
 - developing pupils' use of sketchbooks
 - allocating time for the subject leader to observe teaching and learning at first hand to identify where staff need training and support most.

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