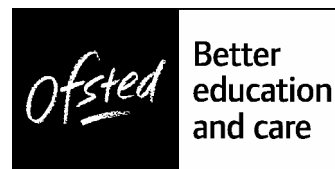


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Mr D Eaton  
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Dear Mr Eaton

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Art, craft and design

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 20 and 21 September 2006 to look at work in art, craft and design.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the subject/aspect, the visit had a particular focus on an evaluation of the effectiveness of provision on the breadth and depth of pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills and the contribution of the subject to pupils' creative development.

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. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included: interviews with staff and students, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' and students' work and observation of four lessons.

The overall effectiveness of art, craft and design was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

Standards and achievements are good overall.

- Examination results at GCSE are generally high and well above national averages. In 2005 results were excellent for boys and girls; in 2006 they are good. At GCE A level high grades are achieved although a

small proportion of students take the subject. Standards of work for all key stages are good and match examination results.

- Students develop good skills in drawing and colour; they work mainly from observation and primary sources. In year 10 and 11 work is confident and their drawing skills are fluid. Year 10 work is of a high standard with good colour, surface texture and lively sequential 3D work developed from studies of the work of Matisse.
- Students met during the visit were well motivated and confident. They are encouraged to aim high during their art course. Behaviour was good in all lessons.

### Quality of teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good overall.

- There was some variation in the quality of teaching and learning in the four lessons seen; the majority were good. Younger students were asked difficult questions and enjoyed coming up with answers. In the sixth form, students produced large scale ink drawings, in group work, with energy and purpose. In most lessons students make good progress, and apply themselves to their projects well.
- Students have a good rapport with the art subject specialist and make thoughtful responses. Homework is linked to projects, is set regularly and completed thoroughly. Most students receive good written feedback that explains fully how to improve work further. Teacher assessment at GCSE is accurate.

### Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- The curriculum for Key Stage 3 and 4 is balanced and carefully planned. Students have experience of using 2D and 3D media in art, craft and design projects. Art and design is a popular choice and numbers have increased in Year 10 and 11.
- Work and projects towards the end of Year 9 are insufficiently linked to early Year 10 work in order to build on the good skills, knowledge and motivation already developed.

### Leadership and management

Subject management is good.

- The subject leader is the only specialist and manages the provision well. Good achievement and standards have been maintained since the last Ofsted inspection. Subject guidance is shared effectively with students and encourages them to aim high.

- Subject self-evaluation contains accurate judgements although analysis is brief. However, the process is in an early stage of development and is not fully established across the school.
- Accommodation is good overall although one studio is under utilised and uninviting.

### Subject issue

The effectiveness of provision on the breadth and depth of pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills and the contribution of the subject to pupils' creative development is satisfactory.

- The curriculum is well structured around a narrow range of similar media and processes, especially in 3D. When most successful, students use several techniques to explore surfaces and enhance their 2D work or 3D forms. For example, in Year 8, students produced delicate and very well executed colour patterns based on the aboriginal culture. Surfaces were embellished further with collage, threads and applied textures allowing individual interpretation to flourish.
- Lesson plans are well implemented and aim for high quality work.
- Creative networks within the school are few. There is also little external networking with other schools which has led to some subject isolation.

### Inclusion

The provision for inclusion is satisfactory overall.

- There is generally good inclusion of different groups of students within lesson activities and their subsequent entry and achievement in external examinations.
- Lesson planning takes adequate account of the needs of different learners; lessons observed indicated that individual needs are addressed effectively in most lessons. However, additional support in one lesson was insufficiently focused on targeting the specific needs of particular pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD).

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- broaden the range of processes available
- link project work between KS3 and 4 more closely
- develop students' personal creative research and exploration, while retaining the present emphasis on inspiration from primary sources
- focus the additional support for students with learning difficulties and disabilities on specific targets for improvement.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop art, craft and design in the school.

As I explained in my previous letter, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority/Local Learning and Skills Council and will be published on Ofsted's website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Sandra Tweedie  
Her Majesty's Inspector