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Mr D Pugh
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Dear Mr Pugh

Ofsted survey inspection programme – art, craft and design

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit with Robert Pyner HMI on 14 November to look at work in art, craft and design.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of art, craft and design, the visit had a particular focus on the impact of provision on the breadth and depth of pupils' subject 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 pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and the observation of four lessons and a visit to a local museum. In 2005 the school was designated as a primary rather than a first school and had pupils up to Year 5 at the time of the visit.

Art, craft and design

The overall effectiveness of the subject was judged to be satisfactory.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are satisfactory.

- In the Reception class children make good progress so that, from below average starting points, their attainment is broadly average by the end of the year. In Key Stages 1 and 2, achievement is satisfactory. Standards are average overall although there are examples of high quality collaborative work resulting from enrichment opportunities, such as a residential course for Year 3 pupils organised with the local authority (LA).
- Pupils enjoy the subject; developing a satisfactory breadth of skills, knowledge and understanding. Behaviour is usually good although some, particularly boys, find it difficult to sustain their concentration in lessons and this slows their progress.

Quality of teaching and learning in art, craft and design

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall but good in Reception.

- Teachers have sound subject knowledge and are committed to the subject. Key aspects of learning are usually explained clearly to pupils. However this is not always the case and sometimes pupils are unclear about the criteria for success.
- Classroom management is good. Most teachers manage formal discussion well, encouraging pupils to talk about their ideas although not always referring enough to pupils' work.
- The short term assessment of pupils' work is satisfactory. Teachers monitor pupils' progress in lessons carefully and some good feedback is given. Teachers' marking is too variable as is the extent of pupils' involvement in deciding how to improve their work.
- The tracking of pupils' progress is satisfactory although levels awarded are not consistently based on a wide enough range of evidence.

Quality of curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory overall and the subject is valued in the school as offering important learning opportunities to pupils.

- High quality enrichment is provided by the Year 3 residential courses and in-school activity weeks. While affording good opportunities for pupils to develop focused skills, for example in printmaking, the learning outcomes are not always built on in regular school work.
- Progression in learning is ensured through plans based on nationally available materials. Useful, but as yet underdeveloped, connections are beginning to be made with other subjects.

- Pupils encounter a satisfactory range of processes and materials with strengths in two-dimensional work. Overall there are too few opportunities for pupils to work in three dimensions, to use information and communications technology or to encounter the work of contemporary and female artists and designers.

Leadership and management of art, craft and design

Leadership and management are satisfactory.

- A regular programme of monitoring and evaluation gives the subject leader a sound grasp of strengths and areas requiring improvement.
- The scrutiny of pupils' work is used well in measuring the effectiveness of provision and this yields some useful priorities for subject development planning. However, insufficient use is made of assessment information to identify strengths and weaknesses in pupils' work relating to different areas of the National Curriculum or to compare the progress of different groups of pupils.

Subject issue – the contribution of the subject to pupils' creative development

Pupils' creative development is satisfactory overall. It is good during the Reception year because pupils have the opportunities to be more involved in making decisions about their work. In other years, pupils explore processes and techniques without fear of failure but within the boundaries set by teachers for each project. Outcomes are therefore varied rather than highly individual. Developing pupils' creativity is identified as a school-wide aim. Work has begun to support creativity across the curriculum although there is no clear definition as to what it means or how it can be measured in subjects.

Inclusion

The subject includes all pupils so that all make at least satisfactory progress. Additional adults provide satisfactory, and sometimes good, support for those with learning difficulties. However some lesson planning is not clear enough about how the needs of different groups will be met. Individual pupils' progress is monitored well but the progress of different groups is not monitored sharply enough.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- to improve the achievement of boys in lessons by engaging them fully
- to develop pupils' knowledge of contemporary and female artists, craftspeople and designers
- to consolidate learning by ensuring that key concepts are consistently well taught and understood by pupils

- to increase, and make more consistent, the pupils' involvement in assessing their own progress and defining the direction of their work
- to strengthen subject evaluation and development by making more use of assessment information, for example about the progress of different groups of pupils, to establish priorities 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 and will be published on Ofsted's website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Long
Her Majesty's Inspector