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Mrs M Clarke
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Clarke

Ofsted 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 05 December 2006 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 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, discussions with pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of four lessons.

Art, craft and design

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

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are good.

- Attainment on entry is below average and pupils make good progress in the Foundation Stage and Key Stages 1 and 2. Standards of attainment compare well with those from similar schools by the time pupils leave.
- Standards in three-dimensional work are above average because pupils confidently explore a wide range of materials to create three-dimensional models, sculptures and artefacts.
- The pupils have positive attitudes towards the subject. Good relationships and carefully planned activities with a good level of challenge for pupils of all abilities ensure that they work with sustained interest and make good progress.

Quality of teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good.

- Pupils really enjoy their learning. They gain knowledge, skills and understanding at a good rate and control media well.
- Teaching is engaging. Lessons are purposeful and planned activities are imaginative and adventurous. Teachers use interactive whiteboards effectively to inspire pupils and to develop their knowledge and understanding of past and present artists, designers and craftspeople.
- Teacher assessment is effective. Drawing and painting assessments are carried out regularly. In some classes helpful comments are made in sketchbooks to indicate how pupils can improve their work. However, there is inconsistency across the school in the way that sketchbooks are used. In some year groups they are effectively used for pupils to explore ideas or investigate line, tone, colour, pattern and form; in others they are used as place to collect finished pieces of work.
- Exemplification portfolios of pupils' work in each year group are used to accurately assess pupils' work.
- Pupils are encouraged to self-evaluate their work. They know what they have set out to achieve, whether they have been successful and what appeals to them.

Quality of curriculum

The curriculum is good.

- The majority of pupils are well served by the curriculum. Pupils' learning is planned from nationally available schemes of work.
- Pupils learn about a broad range of male and female artists, designers and craftspeople. However, the study of non-western art is limited.
- The curriculum is enriched through visits in the immediate locality and by visiting artists. Opportunities for pupils to participate in extra-curricular activities are limited.
- The school's involvement in a Creative Partnership programme has been inspirational for staff and pupils. Developing their ideas alongside a visiting artist, pupils have been motivated to produce some highly imaginative and creative mixed-media, three-dimensional artefacts for a local exhibition.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are good.

- The subject leader has excellent subject knowledge. There is a strong focus on raising standards and promoting the personal development of pupils. Progression routes in drawing and painting have been clearly identified for staff increasing their confidence in teaching the subject.
- Good systems have been established for assessing standards and monitoring the progress that pupils make.

- Resources are well managed and are of good quality, great variety and are plentiful.
- The subject leader has other major responsibilities that limit the time afforded to leading art, craft and design. Insufficient consideration has been given to broadening the curriculum through extra-curricular activities by utilising the expertise of others.

Inclusion

The subject successfully includes all pupils. They respond positively in lessons because their needs and abilities are catered for well. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to work collaboratively to share ideas and work on large scale projects.

Subject issue: breadth, depth and creativity of provision and outcomes in art, craft and design

The development of creativity within pupils' work is good. Visiting artists and visits to see art in the local area inspire pupils and fuel their imagination to create original designs, sculptures and artefacts. Technical skills and techniques are systematically taught and pupils experience a wide range of materials and media. They are able to select and manipulate their preferred media and materials to express their ideas creatively.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of non-western art
- to improve consistency in the way that sketchbooks are used across the school
- to broaden the curriculum through provision of extra-curricular activities.

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

As I explained previously, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be published on the Ofsted website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Linda Killman
Her Majesty's Inspector