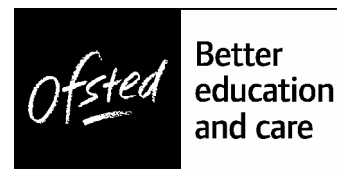


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07 December 2006

Mrs N Jones
Headteacher
St Mary and St Margaret's Church of England Aided Primary School
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Dear Mrs Jones

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 06 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 three lessons.

Art, craft and design

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

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are satisfactory in the Foundation Stage and good in Key Stages 1 and 2.

- Attainment on entry is mixed. Standards of attainment compare well with those from similar schools.
- Most pupils make good progress across the Foundation Stage and Key Stages 1 and 2 particularly in drawing. The pupils thoroughly enjoy working both from observation and imagination.

- The school makes good provision for most pupils to be involved in exploring materials imaginatively to generate original ideas. This facilitates good creative development.
- The pupils have positive attitudes towards the subject. In a recent pupil survey art, craft and design is identified as the most popular subject.

Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning ranges from satisfactory to outstanding. It is good overall.

- Teachers have sound subject knowledge and plan structured lessons that provide suitable challenge for pupils of all abilities. Assessment is used effectively to evaluate how well pupils are learning and to plan for what they need to learn next.
- Class sketchbooks have been developed that include useful comments and development points for pupils. The school recognises that this good practice should be extended to individual sketchbooks.
- Classroom management is good. Resources are well organised enabling pupils to demonstrate a good level of independence as they work. The pupils work purposefully and with sustained interest.
- The teaching of specific skills in handling materials and media is particularly good. Teachers target groups for the teaching of specific skills while others are actively engaged in open ended activities making choices, developing ideas and practising the skills they have learnt.
- Teaching assistants are deployed well. They support pupils skilfully knowing when to offer guidance or support and when to step back. Their involvement in lesson planning and assessment activities develops their understanding of the subject effectively.

Quality of curriculum

The curriculum is good.

- Pupils' learning is planned from nationally available schemes of work. Knowledge, skills and understanding are developed progressively as pupils move through the school.
- The provision for pupils to express creativity in their learning is very good. This results in imaginative outcomes and contributes to pupils' enjoyment of the subject although opportunities for them to work on a large scale or in three dimensions are limited.
- Good links are made with other subjects allowing pupils opportunities to deepen their knowledge and understanding through art related activities. Opportunities for them to learn about non-western art are too few.
- The pupils' learning is enriched through Arts Week, one day and residential visits and visiting artists.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are good.

- The newly appointed, highly organised subject leader has a good knowledge of the subject and has successfully identified where strengths and weaknesses lie. Following effective evaluation of a detailed audit in the subject, a robust three year action plan has been developed to tackle weaknesses in provision and raise standards.
- Teaching and learning are regularly monitored. Staff value the helpful points for improvement they receive and the relevant training that is provided.
- Resources are well used and made widely available.
- Good links have been developed with the local authority providing the school with valuable advice and support leading to improvement in systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress. The artistic skills and talents of parents and local artists are underused.

Inclusion

All groups of pupils work with enthusiasm and are fully engaged in their learning. This is because activities are well planned to meet the needs and abilities of all learners. Pupils' progress is carefully recorded and tracked over time. There are limited opportunities for pupils to study non-western art to develop their knowledge and understanding of different times, cultures and countries.

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

- The development of creativity within pupils' work is good. The majority of pupils are encouraged to make choices, experiment and explore as they work. Lessons are planned to include time for pupils to use their imagination, discuss ideas and explore the potential of media and materials. In the Foundation Stage provision for imaginative play is good.
- Skills are systematically taught in each key stage equipping pupils with the means to work creatively on their own projects. The pupils play with ideas, experiment and try alternatives sharing and developing ideas with others.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- to boost pupils' creative development in the Foundation Stage by promoting free expression and experimentation
- to provide more opportunities for pupils to work on a large scale and in three dimensions
- to include studies of non-western artists, designers and craftspeople in the curriculum
- to develop the pupils use of sketchbooks.

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