

Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE  
T 08456 404045  
F 020 7421 6644  
www.ofsted.gov.uk



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Mrs Alison Whiting  
Headteacher  
Blenheim Primary and Nursery School  
Blenheim Road  
Orpington  
Kent  
BR6 9BH

Dear Mrs Whiting

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 06 October 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, 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 observation of four lessons.

The overall effectiveness of art and design was judged to be satisfactory.

Achievement and standards

Achievement is satisfactory across the Foundation Stage and Key Stages 1 and 2.

- Attainment on entry is very low and standards remain below average by the time pupils leave.

- They enjoy working both from observation and imagination. However, the pupils are hampered in refining and developing their ideas by weak control of materials and by poor speaking and listening skills.
- The pupils have positive attitudes towards the subject. They respond well in lessons although a significant minority find it difficult to sustain their focus on the objectives for learning.

### Quality of teaching and learning in art and design

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, with good elements.

- Teachers have sound subject knowledge and plan well structured lessons which take into account the range of pupils' needs.
- Classroom management is good. Most teachers manage formal discussion well, encouraging pupils to talk about their ideas and affording themselves the opportunity to assess progress.
- The formal teaching of skills in handling materials is a weakness. Few examples were seen of pupils being shown ways to use their materials.
- The short term assessment of pupils' work in lessons is satisfactory and teachers monitor pupils' progress in lessons carefully. However there are weaknesses: the tracking of pupils' progress as they move up the school is not systematic enough and pupils are not involved fully in setting their targets for improvement.

### Quality of curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory.

- Pupils' learning is planned around nationally available schemes of work. These offer satisfactory development of skills, knowledge and understanding. However, insufficient attention is paid to planning each project so that pupils' prior learning is applied and thereby reinforced. Overall there are too few opportunities for pupils to work in three dimensions.
- An age-appropriate range of themes are studied and pupils find these engaging. They learn about a broad range of European art, and some design, but encounter too little work from other cultures. Although their learning is enriched by visits out and an annual artist in residence, the pupils do not know enough about contemporary art and design practice.

### Leadership and management

- Leadership and management are satisfactory with the capacity to bring about improvement.
- The newly appointed subject leader, together with senior colleagues, has a realistic understanding of the quality of subject provision.

- Subject development planning links well to the areas identified for improvement. Nevertheless, evaluation takes too little account of relative strengths and weaknesses in pupils' work in relation to the different areas of the National Curriculum order and this hampers the raising of standards.

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

- The development of creativity within pupils' work is satisfactory. It is identified as a subject aim although there is no clear definition in school documentation. Within the parameters of each project, pupils have satisfactory opportunities to make decisions about their work. Some responses are highly individual and are celebrated by teachers. Pupils value the chance to work experimentally in a subject where there isn't always a correct solution.
- Creative processes are sometimes modelled well by teachers and when this happens pupils are enabled to overcome their modest technical skills. However, this is not sufficiently routine practice in all lessons.

Inclusion

The subject successfully includes all pupils. Lessons are appropriately planned to meet the full range of needs and additional adults provide satisfactory and sometimes good support for pupils with learning difficulties. All groups of pupils respond equally well in lessons. The school monitors individual progress well within each class but its awareness of pupils' progress, including that of different groups of pupils, over time, is not sharp enough.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- to teach pupils better technical skills so they can communicate their ideas more effectively in visual form
- to improve the assessment of pupils' progress over time and involve them more in setting their own goals
- to give pupils more opportunities to work in three dimensions
- to improve pupils' knowledge and understanding of contemporary and non-western artists and designers
- to strengthen subject evaluation through the analysis of relative strengths and weaknesses in pupils' learning across the National Curriculum order.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop art 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