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Dear Mrs Boardman

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 24 January 2007 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 satisfactory.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are satisfactory.

- Overall standards are satisfactory in the Foundation Stage and Key Stages 1 and 2. However there are inconsistencies in the quality of pupils' work as a result of widely variable teaching between year groups. In some aspects of the subject pupils insufficiently build on their previous achievements. For example, in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 pupils use experimentation and explore a variety of media effectively to develop their creativity. However,

although Key Stage 2 work is satisfactory overall, pupils show insufficient development of their earlier creativity.

- Throughout the school pupils' personal development is promoted satisfactorily through the subject; pupils are polite, respectful and listen well to adults and each other. Behaviour is good and pupils are able to collaborate effectively when given opportunities such as weaving on large looms in Year 5. The pupils say that they particularly enjoy the subject because of the opportunities that enable them to express their imagination.

Quality of teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall.

- Teachers' planning is satisfactory; they plan from a scheme of work that provides an adequate basis to develop pupils' subject skills, knowledge and understanding. Lessons have a clear structure and the pupils know what they are expected to learn at the start of the lesson. However, the starting point is usually the same for all pupils and there is little differentiation other than by outcome. Consequently, higher attaining pupils do not always achieve as much as they can.
- Relationships are good and activities sustain the pupils' interest during lessons. However, although encouraging, teachers' comments are insufficiently focussed on checking pupils' understanding of different artists or identifying how individual pupils can improve and develop their own work. The involvement of pupils in evaluating their own work or that of others is at an early stage of development overall.

Quality of curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory.

- The documentation for art, craft and design at the school shows appropriate emphasis on pupils acquiring skills, knowledge and understanding systematically through a broad range of planned activities. Adequate coverage of non-western and western artists, designers and craft-makers is provided. The curriculum is suitably enriched through visits and visitors to the school. Periodically the pupils benefit from working alongside artists which they appreciate. However, teachers' planning is insufficiently monitored to ensure that their interpretation of curriculum documents is secure. Wide variability exists in the use of the curriculum as a basis for individual planning leading to creative teaching.
- The school is successfully developing links with other subjects, particularly in literacy where opportunities are taken to develop the pupils' speaking and listening skills. However, pupils' use of sketchbooks within the subject and across the curriculum is underdeveloped. They are not used regularly to build a repertoire of techniques to draw upon and apply in the context of different activities and subjects or for pupils to appreciate the journey they have taken over time.
- The pupils use computers successfully to create simple designs and images.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management of the subject are inadequate.

- The subject is adequately organised and resourced overall. However, too many inconsistencies exist as a consequence of insufficient monitoring and evaluation of the subject. Although satisfactory teaching and learning leads to pupils' achievements of an overall satisfactory standard, there is little evidence to indicate that these have moved forward.
- The school does not currently have sufficient knowledge of its strengths and weaknesses to fulfil the potential that individual teachers and pupils sometimes show in their teaching and learning. Consequently the school's development plan for the subject provides an insufficient basis for improvement despite an expressed determination by the leadership team to demonstrate their capacity to improve provision and outcomes in the subject.
- Displays of pupils' work exhibited in classrooms and corridors are of a satisfactory standard and provide an adequate starting point for subject self-evaluation. Nevertheless, systematic observation and feedback of teaching and learning in the subject should inform the focus for staff training as a priority.

Inclusion

This is an inclusive school.

Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are supported unobtrusively by teaching assistants to ensure that they make sufficient progress in lessons. Boys and girls enjoy the subject equally and work with enjoyment. Opportunities are taken to develop pupils' awareness of different cultures, faiths and traditions well through the subject.

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

The breadth, depth and creativity of provision is limited. Creative development in the Foundation Stage is constrained by lack of space; pupils are too restricted in their choice of play activities and not a broad enough range of creative activities can be offered at one time. The range of resources available for pupils to use to create original art work is satisfactory yet uninspiring. Training for staff is insufficient to develop their ideas and expertise and to improve their skills and confidence.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- to improve leadership and management in the subject, especially in quality assuring teaching, learning and the impact on the progress made by pupils across the school
- to establish robust systems for teachers to accurately assess the levels that pupils are working at and to involve pupils in assessing the quality of their own and each others' work

- to develop the use of sketchbooks throughout the school
- to provide training opportunities focussed on developing the confidence of staff to teach for creativity.

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