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Mr J Oakshott
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Oakshott

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 22 May 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 and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of four lessons.

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

Achievement and standards

- In the Foundation Stage, pupils' skills in creative development on entry are below age-related expectations. Pupils enjoy the subject and make steady progress over time to reach broadly average standards by the end of Key Stage 2. Achievement is satisfactory overall.
- Pupils use sketchbooks satisfactorily to explore and record ideas although there is inconsistency in how frequently and effectively they are used across the school.
- Pupils gain adequate subject knowledge, skills and understanding over time. They are introduced to the work of a narrow range of mainly

western male artists from different times. Studies of female artists and designers and craftspeople are too few.

- Opportunities are sometimes missed for teachers to model and teach pupils how to use subject specific language in evaluating their work both orally and in writing. Consequently, pupils' limited language in expressing their ideas, reflecting on their work and stating their preferences is insufficiently broadened.
- The pupils have positive attitudes towards the subject often choosing to practise art, craft and design skills at home.
- Good relationships, carefully planned lessons and teachers' good organisational skills ensure that pupils of all abilities work with sustained interest and make satisfactory progress in lessons.

Quality of teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are satisfactory.

- Typical strengths of teaching include good classroom organisation and management, planned activities with high relevance to pupils' lives and well structured lessons with sufficient pace to sustain pupils' interest and enjoyment.
- There is a prevailing weakness in regular and systematic assessment of pupils' work. This leads to teachers having insufficient knowledge of the levels pupils have reached to plan accurately for the next steps in learning.
- Teachers take opportunities to develop pupils' art and design skills in the context of other subjects.
- The pupils' behaviour is good enabling them to work diligently and harmoniously as individuals, in pairs or in groups on collaborative projects.

Quality of the curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory.

- The curriculum is inclusive and responsive to the individual needs and interests of pupils.
- In the Foundation Stage a wide range of creative activities provide pupils with opportunities to draw upon their imagination and experiences as well as to learn important skills in controlling media. Pupils have insufficient freedom to prepare their own materials, constraining their chances to be truly creative. In addition, the outdoor area is underused for creative play.
- Theme weeks such as 'Whizzy Weeks' and Art Week enable pupils to revisit their work and develop their ideas over time.
- Pupils have occasional opportunities to work with artists which they find stimulating and memorable.

- Curriculum planning ensures adequate coverage of the National Curriculum programmes of study through the scheme of work. However, there are few opportunities for pupils to develop skills in printing or to work with textiles.
- The subject is promoted very well through the school's annual exhibition. Pupils take great pride in displaying their work and sharing their achievements with friends and family.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are satisfactory.

- The school is committed to breadth in the curriculum and ensuring appropriate coverage of the subject.
- Resources are managed efficiently.
- The subject policy is well informed, regularly reviewed and matches practice in the school.
- The subject leader successfully co-ordinates the subject ensuring that staff have sufficient resources to deliver the curriculum and advising teachers on curriculum matters. However, detailed monitoring and evaluation of the subject leading to strategic planning for the subject and targeted professional development is less robust.

Subject issue

- Assessment takes place at the end of each unit of work. These assessments relate directly to the taught units in the school's scheme of work but are not linked to National Curriculum levels or age related expectations. Teachers have little experience of moderating pupils' work.
- The most able and least able learners are identified through the assessment process but teachers' planning does not always specify how their needs will be met in lessons.
- Broad evidence of pupils' work is gathered to provide evidence of curriculum coverage and standards in the subject against national exemplification material. Use of the portfolio is underdeveloped. For example, teachers do not draw upon the information to guide them in accurate assessment of pupils' work.

Inclusion

The curriculum is inclusive and accessible to pupils of all abilities. The school is receptive and responsive to racial equality. Opportunities are taken to link the art, craft and design curriculum to studies of art from different cultures and times. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to study the work of female artists, designers and craftworkers.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- strengthen monitoring and evaluation systems so that the school is clear where its strengths and weaknesses lie
- introduce an assessment system to accurately level pupils' work and track their progress in the strands of the National Curriculum for art, craft and design
- ensure that the curriculum ensures that pupils have opportunities to explore a wider range of techniques and studies of female artists, designers and craftworkers.

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 the Ofsted website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Linda Killman
Her Majesty's Inspector