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Mrs J Siddons  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Siddons

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 03 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, discussions with pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work, and observation of three lessons.

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

Achievement and standards

Standards and achievement are variable across the school but good overall.

- Standards are broadly average in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 and above average in Key Stage 2.
- All pupils regularly work with textiles confidently selecting their preferred fabrics, threads and stitching to create collage and appliqué to a good standard.
- By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils use computer software extensively and creatively to explore aspects of design.

- The subject develops the pupils' personal skills to a high level. The pupils work harmoniously sharing ideas, materials and tools. In paired activities they make well considered joint decisions about how their work should develop.
- Over time the pupils make good progress because good assessment procedures provide teachers with extensive knowledge of pupils' prior learning. However, the most talented pupils are less challenged, often having the same starting points as other pupils.
- The pupils' achievement is good. The range of techniques and media they experience and the skills they learn year on year builds their confidence and independence in learning. The older pupils use initiative and explore ideas creatively to produce original outcomes often using mixed media.
- The pupils enjoy using their sketchbooks to explore ideas and to understand shape and form although there is inconsistency in the way that they are used and the frequency of use in different year groups.

### Quality of teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good.

- Teachers' planning is structured and builds on what pupils know and can do. The pupils know what they will learn at the start of the lesson and evaluate their own work and each others' regularly during the lesson against the learning objectives.
- The best teaching allows pupils to refine and develop their ideas over time having time to reflect on their work and research details in between lessons. Probing questioning requires pupils to make considered responses in evaluating their work and draw upon their knowledge of world art. This approach allows pupils of all abilities and in this instance, the high attaining pupils to flourish.
- Learning is supported by good relationships throughout the school. The pupils' behaviour is excellent enabling them to work diligently and harmoniously as individuals, in pairs or in groups on collaborative projects.

### Quality of the curriculum

The curriculum is good.

- The school makes effective use of a published scheme of work to provide good coverage of all visual elements and progression in the teaching of skills and processes. The school is on the cusp of major redesign and curriculum innovation injecting further opportunities for creativity and links across subjects.
- In the Foundation Stage the pupils play imaginatively especially outside, where well planned activities stimulate them to express themselves freely and creatively.

- The pupils learn about an extensive range of artists, designers and craftworkers from different ages, cultures and countries. However, their depth of knowledge about individual artists is more limited.
- The local environment is used extensively as a source for observational drawing activities for all ages. Residential trips and school visits to local places of interest incorporate art, craft and design activities. For example, pupils design and make their own tiles and learn to use the tubelining technique to decorate them at the local Jackfield Tile Museum. Enrichment through clubs with an art, craft and design focus is limited.
- Arts Week is a regular feature in the curriculum and interesting themes such as 'Africa', 'By the Sea' include a focus on art, craft and design activities often led by visiting artists.

## Leadership and management

Leadership and management are good.

- Since its previous inspection the school has made good progress in developing the role of the subject leader. The subject leader clearly focuses on standards and outcomes of the subject's annual review are communicated to all staff and governors with recommendations for future improvements.
- A link governor for art, craft and design makes regular visits to the school to monitor the effectiveness of the subject.
- Resources are well managed and plentiful.
- The quality of display throughout the school is good and appreciated by the pupils. There is a good balance of two and three dimensional work on exhibition.

## Subject issue: the impact of assessment on pupils' progress and creativity

A system for assessing pupils' work has been successfully introduced and the data is analysed by the subject leader to highlight strengths and weaknesses in the subject. 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 are developing their skills in levelling and moderating pupils' work in the subject.

## Inclusion

Pupils of both genders, varying abilities and from different social backgrounds fully access the curriculum and show great enthusiasm for the subject.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- draw upon the school's best practice in teaching and learning to ensure that gifted and talented pupils in all year groups are sufficiently challenged
- improve consistency in the use of sketchbooks
- develop the existing assessment system so that teachers have a clear idea of how well pupils achieve in relation to National Curriculum levels.

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