

20 June 2007

Mr Mike Baumring  
Headteacher  
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Moorehouse Road  
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Dear Mr Baumring

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 11 June 2007 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 quality of assessment in the subject and its impact on pupils' progress.

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 lessons.

The overall effectiveness of art, craft and design was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

Achievement in art, craft and design is good and standards are above average by Year 7.

- The pupils start at the school with average standards. Both boys and girls develop good skills in manipulating materials and processes from a range of starting points. Information and communication technology is used well as an expressive medium.

- Pupils work well from direct observation, building good understanding of the visual elements. They develop equal confidence in working imaginatively, for example using colour for symbolic purposes.
- Their skills are less well developed in refining and modifying their work where relative weaknesses in using subject specific vocabulary hinder the process of reflection when writing about or discussing work.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy the subject, responding enthusiastically to lessons and extra-curricular opportunities. They develop productive work-habits, maturity and teamwork through the subject.

## Quality of teaching and learning

Teaching and learning in art, craft and design are good.

- Lessons are well planned to meet the needs of all pupils. Plans usually include clear learning objectives although a minority cite tasks to be completed rather than what will be learnt through them.
- Teachers are knowledgeable, keen, have good relationships with pupils and know them well. They make good use of demonstrations and supporting contextual materials. The latter are shared and developed effectively among the teachers and make a big impact on learning, especially via the interactive whiteboards which are used skilfully.
- The school as a whole focuses well on developing pupils' oracy and subject lessons afford good opportunities to support this through, for example, discussion.
- Support for pupils with additional learning needs, including those speaking English as an additional language, is good. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution including helping to manage behaviour. On occasions however, they lack the subject knowledge to move pupils' learning forward as distinct from ensuring tasks are done.

## Quality of the curriculum

The curriculum for art, craft and design is good.

- The pupils respond well to the subject curriculum, enjoying the range of themes studied alongside valuable enrichments such as gallery visits and the links made between the subject and other curriculum areas.
- Pupils' learning is sensibly structured, ensuring that skills and knowledge build logically and are re-visited for reinforcement.
- While the curriculum is good overall, there are some weaknesses. The pupils receive good exposure to European artists and designers up to the mid-twentieth century but have too few opportunities to explore contemporary practice. Similarly, the pupils' diverse ethnic heritages are reflected well in the broader curriculum and in some art and design projects but are not referred to systematically.

## Leadership and management

Leadership and management are good.

- The subject leader is highly committed, is well informed about wider subject development and has boosted achievement during her time in post. As a result, the subject is valued within the school community.
- The use of a wide range of qualitative monitoring, including work scrutiny and lesson observation, gives her a good awareness of strengths and weaknesses within the pupils' learning and in subject provision. However analysis of assessment data to support the monitoring process and identify patterns in achievement is underused.
- The subject leader fosters good teamwork, using the outcomes of her monitoring well to target staff, resource and curriculum development and supporting her colleagues well.

Subject issue: the quality of assessment and its impact on pupils' progress

- This is judged to be good. Pupils receive regular and useful guidance for improvement via discussion with teachers in lessons and through marking.
- The pupils understand the way their work is assessed; a school-wide approach helps in making this clear.
- Lessons give pupils good opportunities to assess their own and others' work and define ways forward. Respectful relationships between the pupils themselves and with teachers support this process very well.
- Teachers work effectively together to award levels to work at the end of projects because of good support from the subject leader.
- Pupil's progress is monitored carefully across each year and communicated well to parents and carers. Nevertheless, long term targets are not clear enough to enable underachievement between years to be identified systematically.

## Inclusion

Inclusion in the subject is good. The progress made by different groups of pupils is good because teaching meets their needs. The pupils respond well to the curriculum, enjoying their studies, albeit with scope to increase references to their diverse cultural heritages. Subject teachers are very aware of each pupil's progress and have consistently high expectations. Some outstanding steps are taken to tailor provision to meet needs, for example using family learning workshops to support pupils identified as requiring additional help. While there is good awareness of strengths and weaknesses within individual pupil's achievement, subject monitoring does not rigorously check assessment data to refine provision and ensure all ethnic or ability groups do equally well.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- giving pupils more experience of contemporary art and design including that from a range of cultural backgrounds
- making more use of assessment data about pupils' progress, both across different areas of the subject and toward long term targets, in order to focus initiatives and check the impact made on all pupils' achievement.

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

Stephen Long  
Her Majesty's Inspector