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Mr A Harding  
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Dear Mr Harding

Ofsted survey inspection programme – art and design

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 5 November 2007 to look at work in art 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 assessment on the progress and creativity of learners. The visit provided a valuable contribution 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 and standards are satisfactory.

- Pupils enter the Reception Year with average knowledge and skills in art and design and make satisfactory progress. By the end of Year 2 their ability to manipulate a range of media is good and they have a well developed vocabulary about art. This enables pupils to explore ideas about themselves and observe and describe their surroundings.
- Progress in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory overall but experimentation and expressiveness are not developed as well as they could be. By the end of Year 6 standards are average
- Observational skills are well developed and pupils employ the subject matter and style of well known artists effectively in their own work. Girls often produce a higher standard of work than boys in the more controlled, analytical tasks. All pupils widen their range of skills well through printmaking and sculpture using different 3D media.

- Personal development is good. Pupils are confident and tackle new ideas and processes enthusiastically. They work well together and collaborate effectively on small group or whole class projects.
- Pupils show responsible attitudes towards their work and resources. Together with their ability to use design skills and suggest new ideas this contributes to pupils' future economic wellbeing.
- The pupils' ability to explore and express imagination, personal feelings or interpret contemporary issues is underdeveloped.

### Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory with some good features.

- Teachers plan and organise lessons effectively; they run smoothly at a good pace. The interest and commitment shown by teachers is reflected in enthusiasm, cooperation and good behaviour of the pupils.
- Learning is occasionally limited by the teacher's inexperience or lack of knowledge in some areas. However, lessons usually demand an appropriate level of challenge and opportunity for pupils to learn new skills and processes.
- Assessment is insufficiently used to identify and share with pupils the next steps required to build on their learning or, for the most able pupils, opportunities to develop independence and initiative. Marking is insufficiently regular or standardised; this limits achievement of the high levels by the most able young artists. Other pupils are sometimes unclear about what they have achieved.
- Lessons are managed well to promote safety. Support by classroom assistants ensures that everyone is fully involved and cared for.

### Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory.

- Teachers plan effectively together in Year groups and the programmes of study take good account of National Curriculum guidance. This ensures that work is pitched at an appropriate level for their age, covers a wide range of media and processes as well as the study of art and craft from different times and cultures.
- Pupils occasionally work with artists or craft workers from the local arts centre and whole school themes are pursued imaginatively in art lessons or on off-timetable days.
- Effective links are made with science, technology and literature particularly through observation and recording, construction and sculpture. Computers are used for art and design by pupils of all ages.
- 'The environment' and 'health' form an important part of the programme but there are too few opportunities for pupils to develop individual ideas and express personal feelings through the subject.
- Pupils are equipped with sketchbooks in Years 3 to 6. They are used to record and plan work but their use is intermittent and inconsistent; they do not provide a good record of pupils interests and progress through the school.

## Leadership and management

Leadership and management of art and design are satisfactory.

- Teaching and learning in art and design is organised by a curriculum group that also oversees science and PE; there is no specific leader or art specialist. The subject is clearly valued within the school. The curriculum group is keen to move the subject forward; a recent review of progression has led to curriculum development relevant to improvement in the subject.
- Teachers work and plan together well and share ideas and resources effectively. However, there is insufficient monitoring of learning in or through the subject through lesson observation. Aspects of good practice are not yet identified, shared and developed more widely.

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

The impact of assessment on pupils' progress and creativity is satisfactory.

- Whilst the school fulfils the requirement to assess pupils' work at the end of each Key Stage, teachers do not yet have a system of ongoing assessment that enables individual pupils to know how well they are doing or what they need to do to improve.
- Teachers observe pupils' progress during lessons and intervene appropriately to develop their subject knowledge and skills. However, there is insufficient probing or tracking related to their creativity.

## Inclusion

Inclusion is satisfactory.

- Pupils of all abilities, including those with learning difficulties or disabilities take part in the full range of art and design activities. Teachers employ classroom assistants effectively to ensure that pupils are fully engaged. Every lesson is positive and encouraging.
- The lack of planning for different starting points slows the progress of pupils who are not in the 'average' ability range. However, gifted or talented pupils occasionally benefit from visits outside the school or specially organised events. Pupils with specific learning difficulties, disabilities or behaviour problems receive targeted support to help them progress. The school has a small proportion of pupils from ethnic minorities who are well integrated.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included to:

- improve assessment in order to differentiate teaching and learning, promote creativity and accelerate progress for all pupils
- increase opportunities for pupils to encounter contemporary issues, develop imagination and personal expression through the curriculum
- develop lesson monitoring and evaluation in the subject to inform improvement priorities and to identify and share best practice.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop art and design at the school. As I explained in my previous letter, a copy of this report will be sent to your Local Authority and published on the Ofsted website. It will also be available to the team for your next school inspection.

Yours sincerely

Chris Shaw  
Additional Inspector