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Mr P MacIntyre
Headteacher
Chenderit School
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Dear Mr MacIntyre

Ofsted subject survey: identifying good practice in art and design

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 20 November 2007 to look at the impact of the gallery on pupils' learning and achievement.

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 without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included interviews with you; the head of Visual Arts; the Advanced Skills Teacher for learning; teaching staff and artists in residence; discussions with pupils in lessons; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work and observation of pupils working in the gallery.

Features of good practice observed

- The school takes great pride in its specialist status and the good achievement of its pupils. This is immediately apparent to visitors by the impressive, visually exciting displays of quality work on show in the gallery, the art and design department and in communal areas of the school. The school sets high standards in aesthetics for all pupils to appreciate and aspire to.
- The leadership and management of the art and design department are outstanding. The head of Visual Arts generates vision, passion and enthusiasm; expectations for high standards and achievement are consistent; change is welcomed, embraced and continuously improves provision and outcomes for pupils.

- The pupils own creative practice is informed and developed through a powerful cocktail of their first hand observations of living artists at work; opportunities to visit and revisit the work of contemporary artists in the gallery; and extended residential trips to cultural centres at home and abroad. These rich experiences contribute to their extensive knowledge and appreciation of art from different genres.
- The immense enthusiasm and commitment of staff and their selfless generosity in the quality time they spend with pupils throughout and beyond the school day, generates a lively and welcoming environment for learners. Many pupils appreciate this and choose to visit the department in their own time to complete projects or to catch up on course work, thus creating a very healthy work ethic.
- The gallery programme is extremely well managed and meticulously planned. Inclusion and diversity is successfully achieved through careful selection of artists, designers and craftworkers. In addition, short term exhibitions retain freshness and edge.
- The gallery club is popular and take up of places is high. Pupils aged 10-16 with varying abilities are stimulated by the work on exhibition to widen their experiences, trial new ideas and develop their skills. The club generates a huge fun factor contributing to pupils' enjoyment of the subject.
- The outreach work undertaken by the specialist teachers and artists in residence is wide reaching and effective. Around ten local partnership primary schools and other local schools benefit from enhanced art and design provision funded and organised by Chenderit. Subject specialist teaching and the use of good quality specialist art materials inspire the pupils and get them 'switched on' to art at an early age. The department develops primary teachers' subject knowledge and expertise through training to improve the quality of their teaching in art in design.
- The creation of the gallery provides a focal point for the community and is regularly used to celebrate success and boost pupils' self-esteem. Many pupils gain valuable insight into the process of planning and arranging an exhibition.
- The regular purchase of artefacts and art provides an extensive bank of quality resources for pupils at Chenedrit to draw upon for inspiration and provides an accessible loan collection for other schools.

Area for development

- Evaluate the effectiveness of the department's outreach work in primary schools using measurable criteria for success.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop the gallery in school.

As I explained previously, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be published on Ofsted's website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Linda Killman
Her Majesty's Inspector