

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404040
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



14 March 2008

Mr D McCready
Headteacher
Wolfreton School
South Ella Way
Kirk Ella
East Yorkshire
HU10 7LU

Dear Mr McCready

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Art and design

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 11 and 12 March 2008 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 in art and design had a particular focus on the quality of assessment in the subject and its impact on students' progress and creativity. 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 students, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of students' work and observation of five lessons in art and design.

Art and design

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

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are good.

- Standards in Key Stage 3 are good overall. Students arrive at the school in Year 7 with mixed experiences and attainment in art. They quickly gain skills in Year 7 and 8 in a range of 2D media particularly

from working and drawing from direct observation. In a large Year 8 display, students have produced richly coloured, imaginative jungle paintings showing sensitivity for pattern making, good use of critical references and considerable skill in developing tonal qualities. Year 9 students' portrait and other work is sensitively observed in a traditional range of media.

- In Year 10 and 11 students produce a range of mixed media work using their own interpretations. Students are able to use existing skills in new contexts. They work in a good range of 2D and some 3D media. Sketch books in Year 11 show understanding of evaluation and the stages in development. The use of digital media, and experimentation is balanced by some carefully observed drawing. Some effective work has been recently inspired by 3D constructions of artist Frank Stella.
- The concerted focus in the last two years by the school and art staff, on monitoring students' progress closely and improving the quality of art and design provision is having a positive impact at GCSE and A level. At GCSE achievement at Grades A*-C has shown a marked upward trend since 2005 to the national average in 2007. All students are entered, achieve a grade, and overall attain results in line with expectations, including A*A grades.
- In the sixth form GCSE AS and A2 results in photography and AS Fine Art were very good in 2007. At AS level, students' progress was outstanding; almost all students achieved a grade higher than predicted placing them in the top 10% nationally.
- Students in photography are working at a high standard and making good progress. In fine art students are working well in the subject and standards are average. Currently second year photography students are producing strong development books and images with striking and also subtle juxtapositions. While working, students show the ability to think carefully about the creative and technical stages in the process and can talk about their ideas confidently.
- Students' attitudes and behaviour are very good, they are keen in lessons, enjoy the subject, and many use the studios at lunchtimes and after school. Students get on well with their teachers and the art technician; their efforts to guide and help are appreciated by students. A recent policy to mount more displays of work for each year group contributes to the quality of learning environment and enables students and their families to appreciate and evaluate the work of others.

Quality of teaching and learning in art and design

Teaching and learning in art and design are good overall.

- Teachers' lesson planning and structure follows a whole school approach with the aim of improving teaching and learning. In some good and better lessons there was a strong focus on encouraging

students to work productively within time constraints and for them to review what they were achieving at stages during and at the end of the lesson. An effective strategy in Year 11 and in the sixth form enabled students to record their weekly progress by use of a 'lesson log'.

- Timed activities were also used effectively in several lessons in Key Stage 3 and 4, stimulating quick thinking, close attention and interest, experimentation and ideas.
- The processes of review and reflection, student self evaluation and peer evaluation have been developed by art staff in the last two years and they are very effective tools. Students were able to offer considered opinions on their own and others work in relation to what they had set out to do, particularly in Key Stage 4 and sixth-form.
- Teachers demonstrate the use of a new media skilfully and use their own work and that of students analytically as visual aids.
- In lessons, teachers' 'one to one' discussions with students are helpful and generally unobtrusive. In a small number of lessons teachers did not allow students enough time to think for themselves and speculate on answers when new ideas or concepts were introduced. Questions asked by teachers were not always 'open ended' enough.
- Year 9 lesson activities do not challenge students sufficiently to draw on their individual interests, experiences or observations in order to develop original and diverse outcomes.

Quality of the curriculum

The curriculum in art and design is satisfactory with some good features.

- The subject leader's recent review of the curriculum has restated priorities to raise achievement and this is having a positive impact. Student numbers are showing a steady increase.
- Students are benefiting from extended curriculum opportunities. They have good access to studios and use them well between lessons. However, there are too few opportunities at present for visiting artists and designers or external visits to provide students at all stages with further insights, ideas and perspectives about creative working.
- The school plans to introduce, in September 2008, cross subject working days and opportunities for extended, in depth learning in Key Stage 3. The current scheme of work has been thoughtfully developed and gives a satisfactory foundation in a range of traditional media. There is a good focus on working from direct observation, developing tonal and colour work. Opportunities to work in 3D are too limited.
- In Key Stage 4 the curriculum is balanced and interesting to students, promoting more personal responses. Mixed media work, digital images and low relief 3D constructions are all used to develop creative resolutions.
- Life drawing sessions have been held for sixth form fine art students at weekend events.

Leadership and management of art and design

The leadership and management of the subject are good.

- The subject self evaluation is thorough and contain largely accurate judgements. Areas for improvement are integrated into whole school self-evaluation. Senior managers are supportive of the work of the subject staff. The subject leader who was appointed in 2006 and the art team are dedicated and hardworking. There have been considerable difficulties recently which have been managed well. These include the long term illness of a member of art staff and the problems caused when both school buildings and art rooms were flooded. Studios now provide a stimulating environment.
- The art curriculum has been revised to provide more cohesion in the qualifications offered and the focus by staff on raising standards in the subject is having a positive impact on achievement. However, progression between Year 9 and the GCSE course could be improved.
- Improvement is evident. For example, assessment and students' involvement in evaluation have increased both students' motivation and the quality of work. Recruitment to option courses has increased.
- Resources are satisfactory due to efficient management. In photography there is a high demand for existing digital equipment for the numbers of students.

Subject issue: The impact of assessment on learners' progress and creativity.

This is good.

- There is a thorough approach to assessment and the monitoring of students' progress.
- Data is interrogated from several sources to identify areas for further improvement and actions. In the use of the 'traffic light' system and close monitoring of progress, art staff take prompt action if there are signs of underperformance by individuals.
- Effective practice in the introduction of self and peer evaluation is increasing students' awareness of the stages of creative work and more involvement in the assessment process.
- Creative and imaginative approaches are encouraged.

Inclusion

The subjects' approach to inclusion is good.

- Students, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) are given effective guidance and support in the subject. They

are well supported by teachers and have a good rapport with them. All students are entered for GCSE art and design and they are encouraged and supported to achieve.

- The ethos and values of the art and design subject area have recently been reviewed and strengthened. Individuals' views are respected and valued by staff and other students, through the use of self evaluation and also critical feedback by peers.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- increase opportunities for students to work with visiting artists and designers or make external visits in order to deepen their understanding about how artists and designers work, and contribute to students' creative aspirations
- develop the curriculum in Year 9 in order to meet the needs and interests of all students, providing greater opportunities and challenges for individual or collaborative responses in 2 and 3D media
- ensure that in lessons teachers' questioning or students' discussions with their peers, allows sufficient time for individuals to develop answers and ideas, to speculate and consider different solutions.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop art 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

Sandra Tweedie
Additional inspector