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Mrs A Peachey
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Dear Mrs Peachey

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Creative Learning

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 29 September to look at creative learning.

As outlined in our initial letter, the visit had a particular focus on the ways in which you develop creative learning and the impact this is having on achievement and standards and on pupils' personal development.

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 you, with several staff including the Learning Mentor, discussions with pupils, scrutiny of some documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of five lessons.

The overall effectiveness of your school's development of creative learning was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards and personal development

Pupils start school with attainment on entry well below average and their communication, language and literacy skills are weak. With this in mind, the focus has been to raise standards of literacy across the school and the general upward trend year on year is positive with challenging targets met in Year 2 and nearly met in Year 6. Progress is consistently good in mathematics and value added data puts your school firmly above similar schools in Bristol and nationally. Good standards and achievement can be linked to the exemplary way every single child is cared for and supported and in the steady progress seen in personal development. The very warm ethos and the colourful and stimulating environment demonstrate the value placed on each

child and their many achievements. Pupils begin to believe in themselves and gain confidence in expressing not only "what pops into my head" but also what they think and feel when giving things more measured thought.

Mathematics is most successful in the school because pupils relate more easily to number and because of the thorough base of mathematical knowledge and understanding which is built on from a young age. Writing, on the other hand, is much more difficult and much of what the school is doing is aimed at raising standards further. A minority across the school finds it very hard to talk at length, envisage what might be or respond with maturity.

Pupils present their work neatly and want to please their teachers and try hard because they know it is the right thing to do. In "Thinking Skills" sessions they have lots of fun and share views together. These sessions help them make connections, express new ideas and evaluate the effects of their actions. Children are beginning to ask questions which challenge each other. One asked, "Why is the sky blue?" and pupils were encouraged to find an answer by the next lesson. Drama lessons are boosting confidence and enable pupils to see the world in different ways.

Quality of teaching and learning

Very good teaching seen was characterised by excellent relationships, good pace, open questioning and high expectations. In return good learning was evident in all lessons and pupils are secure in knowing that making mistakes is a part of the process of learning. Using a range of strategies, pupils explore themes such as hopes and fears when they "feel the storm" and "feel the boat tossing" in a literacy lesson which challenged them both mentally and physically and was great fun.

Marking of work is very supportive and pupils are beginning to self assess which is helping them reflect on how to improve and think for themselves. Staff use Every Child Matters outcomes to assess personal development. Listening to all pupils is a very strong feature which supports creative learning well not least because it boosts confidence levels and so children are prepared to have a go.

Approaches to learning in English are not yet as effective as in mathematics and science. Lesson planning reflects recent collaborative discussion among staff on the ways forward to improve literacy skills; theme weeks in science or literacy are well established. Lots of interesting research into the history of Bristol kick-starts projects which are talked about by children of all ages with good recall. What is especially good is that you plan to not only build on current interests and enthusiasms but you also plan imaginative surprises when new topics are faced and in this way support creative learning well.

Quality of the curriculum

The curriculum is currently being changed to promote literacy skills and writing in particular as well as creative thinking. Comprehension is now timetabled daily to support the development of skills including enquiry and

problem solving and gives pupils time to reflect and review. Nearly every lesson in every subject now has a literacy learning objective many of which can be linked to creative learning. In addition, many visits and visitors enrich the curriculum and provide pupils with a very wide range of experiences which many would not otherwise have the opportunity to get involved in. Pupils talked with excitement about their visit to "The Snow Queen" and the imaginative and creative work across the curriculum which stemmed from that visit was of very high quality.

Leadership and management

Leaders and managers are working very hard and in particularly challenging circumstances in an area of significant deprivation where approximately 50% of the intake has an identified learning difficulty or disability. Free school meals uptake is approximately twice the national average. You have created an outstanding environment, with well chosen resources of the very highest quality, which is impacting hugely on the development of creative learning. Displays are wonderful not only for their artistic and creative diversity and because they reflect ideas in a range of ways but because they encourage children to ask questions, to see relationships and to appreciate the world around them from different perspectives.

The commitment from your enthusiastic team of staff to supporting the development of self esteem and sense of well being is really valued by the children who feel safe and secure. Some, however, continue to find it hard to express themselves and lack independence and maturity in their thinking. Through looking outside the school and working with other schools and consultants you demonstrate that you are committed to continued improvement in identified areas, including that of creative learning.

Equality and diversity

The attention given to widening pupils understanding of diversity is outstanding. Pupils' with identified learning difficulties are very well supported and make at least as good progress as all pupils. Your work on "The Rights of the Child" promotes the schools ethos very effectively.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- evaluating the recent changes being made to the curriculum to ensure they are fully effective and that these changes impact positively on levels of independence, levels of maturity and also on creative learning.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop creative styles of learning in your school.

As explained in our 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

Charlotte Roberson
Additional Inspector