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26 November 2008

Mrs J Ward
Acting Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Ward

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Creative Learning

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 20 November 2008 to look at creative learning.

As outlined in my 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 staff and learners, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of four lessons and several parts of lessons.

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

Achievement and standards and personal development

The school's approach to creative learning has a very positive impact on achievement because pupils are highly motivated to learn, whether this be in developing basic skills or applying their knowledge and understanding. By the end of Year 2, national tests show that standards are significantly above average. Pupils develop particularly good analytical skills because staff provide innovative structures to support this learning. For example, in Year 2 pupils confidently analysed the setting, sound, action and language of a film as part of a multimodality project. A much higher than average proportion of pupils reaches the expected level by the end of Year 6, which reflects pupils' confidence in gaining new skills. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are much higher than expected. Pupils develop skills

including producing sophisticated 3D animations very confidently or manipulating sound tracks to enhance the reading of the poems that have been written in literacy.

Pupils are extremely confident, articulate and reflective. They acquire these skills through the many opportunities to take responsibility for creative projects, such as designing their own physical education activities to provide data for analysis in science. Pupils relish taking responsibility and are very proud of their achievements. They appreciate that they have to apply and train for their jobs, such as running the school office at lunchtimes. They have an excellent understanding of how to work as part of a team to agree on different key roles, handle a budget, produce a high quality outcome and appreciate each member's efforts. They systematically develop these skills through carefully sequenced creative learning projects each year. They show great confidence in taking part in events in the wider community. For example, the school is regularly successful in getting pupils to the national finals of a competition that can require the learning of three new languages, Dutch, Vietnamese and Zulu. Pupils are now in a good position to extend their analysis of how well they are developing skills of creative learning as they progress through the school.

Quality of teaching and learning with respect to creative learning

This is outstanding. Teachers organise teaching assistants, students, parents and other regular adult support to provide high quality interaction within the group's work. This ensures that pupils quickly understand how to tackle new ways of learning and receive plenty of help in any practical activities. Teachers use their interactive whiteboards and computers skilfully to open up new ways for pupils to learn. This ranges from providing contrasting pod-casts with different effects to presenting short extracts of films or creating individual firework pictures. Teachers provide high quality opportunities for pupils to organise themselves in pairs and groups to tackle new learning. There is excellent use of homework for pupils to carry out their own research to contribute to lessons and enhance their presentations to their fellow pupils.

Quality of the curriculum

This is outstanding. The half-termly creative key project for each year groups is innovative and purposeful. The use of ICT greatly enhances pupils' learning, from the production of e-books, to the 3D animated cartoons and the video pod-casting. The many creative ways that staff combine different subjects throughout the year is excellent. The curriculum for Spanish follows the school's philosophy of offering different creative ways of learning extremely well. The inclusion of specialists from the community, the church and business further extends opportunities for innovative learning.

Leadership and management of creative learning

This is outstanding. You have a very clear vision of the importance of creative learning, which is at the heart of your mission statement. The roles of creative learning co-ordinators in both key stages give a very strong focus for the continuing development in this aspect. The monitoring of initiatives is

extremely thorough and ensures that the school builds systematically on previous successes. There is a very high level of commitment from staff, who are keen, flexible and ready to make changes for the better. The strategy of using internal expertise and outside specialists to drive whole staff development forward is extremely effective.

Equality and diversity

This is excellent. The wide range of different teaching strategies used to provide creative opportunities for learning ensures that all pupils experience success in learning. This increases their confidence in tackling new challenges. The different spiritual and cultural content for topics celebrates diversity very effectively and the high profile of ICT motivates boys particularly well.

Area for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- extending pupils' skills of evaluating their own creative learning development as they move through the school.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop creative learning 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

Maggi Shepherd
Additional Inspector