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Dear Ms Williams

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Art and design

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 12 November 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 had a particular focus on how effectively connections to the work of other artists, craftworkers and designers promote the pupils' 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 pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of teaching and learning in the Reception class.

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

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are satisfactory.

- On entry, children's creative skills are limited. They make good progress because they are experiencing a wide range of activities designed to develop their creativity throughout the day inside the classroom and outdoors. The children show great pleasure in pursuing their ideas. For example, in the ice palace they ask to make ice crowns and model them with pride. The curriculum is personalised for children. One child created a cave outside from corrugated card. This was deliberately left out in the rain so that he could see how the cave collapsed when exposed to water. A

cocktail of well-chosen activities, sensitive and timely adult intervention and secure systems for assessing children's progress result in their rapid progress towards the early learning goals. Most are working securely within the goals for creative development by the end of Reception and some exceed them.

- Pupils make satisfactory progress in developing their skills and creativity through Key Stages 1 and 2 with most pupils reaching expected standards for their age.
- Work seen in pupils' sketchbooks shows that they are underused by pupils to gather and store ideas, feelings and thoughts that may be referred to or put into action at a later stage.
- Most girls and boys say that they enjoy the subject and display good attitudes towards the subject.
- Pupils with significant special needs and those with special talents in art and design make very good progress because they are supported excellently. They have regular access to specialist teaching and master classes respectively.

Quality of teaching and learning of art and design

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

- Observation of children at play in the Early Years Foundation Stage highlighted the very good relationships that exist between adults and children. This gives children the confidence to put their own ideas forward and to make independent choices.
- Teachers' planning ensures that lessons provide adequate coverage of the art and design curriculum. Pupils' individual needs and abilities are taken into account, enabling all pupils to make satisfactory progress.
- The success of particular units of work is evaluated by teachers and support staff in order to adapt curriculum planning.
- Evidence of pupils' work is gathered systematically to support teacher assessment. This in turn informs the setting of subsequent objectives.

Quality of the curriculum

The curriculum is good.

- The curriculum enables teachers and learners to meet the objectives of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and the National Curriculum.
- The school chosen scheme of work ensures that pupils learn to manipulate a broad range of materials, media and tools. They experience working in 2D and 3D in large and smaller scales. The pupils are given opportunities to develop ideas from imagination, memory and observation. This provides them with a sound foundation for future learning.
- Vulnerable pupils are well supported through the art and design curriculum. The 'Green Room Club' meets daily and pupils enjoy

'painter days' where they explore the work of painters from different times. 'Dress up and draw' days are likewise well received.

- The school maximises use of the attractive school grounds. Pupils regularly draw and paint outside where there is a wealth of architecture and natural forms to study.
- The pupils' experiences in the subject are limited when they start school. In response, the curriculum is extensively enriched with visits to exhibitions and workshops making good use of the wealth of galleries in the local area including the Stockport and Whitworth galleries as well as the Lowry.
- The school takes full advantage of opportunities for pupils to take part in community projects to extend pupils' experiences in the subject. The older pupils mount and exhibit their own work in the school gallery.
- Parent involvement is encouraged through the subject. When pupils' work is exhibited in the Primary School Art Exhibition they are invited to attend the viewing. Parents of pupils with special gifts in the subject are encouraged to take their children to weekend and holiday workshops in local galleries such as the Whitworth Gallery, Stockport Gallery and the Lowry.

Leadership and management of art and design

Leadership and management in art and design are satisfactory.

- Interim arrangements are in place for subject leadership with the headteacher currently taking responsibility. The subject is managed satisfactorily. The headteacher is appropriately tapping into the subject specialist knowledge provided by two teaching assistants with qualifications in art and design.
- Photographic evidence shows that pupils' work is usually displayed to a satisfactory standard. Ongoing building works currently constrain the extent to which pupils' work can be displayed.
- Monitoring and evaluation of the subject is regular and reveals strengths and weaknesses in the subject that are taken into account in strategic planning for improvement. Teaching and learning are observed. The teachers are given positive feedback; however, points for development are omitted during the process.
- Resources are well maintained.

Subject issue: how effectively connections to the work of other artists, craftworkers and designers promote the pupils' creativity.

This is satisfactory.

- Pupils' develop satisfactory knowledge and understanding of artists, designers and craftspeople from different cultures, countries and times. Collections of pupils' work include several where pupils had learned from the work of others and produced their own original art. Their paintings in the style of L S Lowry show wide variation in the way they apply their knowledge and understanding of the artist's work. All depict the same basic range of colours that Lowry

used. However, their compositions show connection to the artist in different ways; some focus on every day scenes of people whilst others explore architecture to create an urban landscape.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- develop pupils' use of sketchbooks
- make secure arrangements for future leadership in the subject
- assist teachers in improving their practice by signposting developmental points.

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

Linda Killman
Her Majesty's Inspector