

Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404045  
F 020 7421 6855  
www.ofsted.gov.uk



20 January 2009

Ms S Warrington  
Headteacher  
Chace Community School  
Churchbury Lane  
Enfield  
EN1 3HQ

Dear Ms Warrington

Ofsted survey inspection programme - art and design

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 13 and 14 January 2009 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 well students 'learn to think and act as artists, craftspeople and designers, working creatively and intelligently' and 'develop an appreciation of art, craft and design, and its role in the creative and cultural industries that enrich their lives'. 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 a sample of lessons.

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

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are good.

- The students make a good start in their first three years study with the majority enjoying their learning. By the end of Year 9 the standards reached are a little below average but this represents good progress from below average attainment on entry, including for the high proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or who speak English as an additional language. Relatively few students exceed the expected level of attainment.
- Older students opt for the subject in good numbers at GCSE and A-level. They make good progress and achieve standards in-line with those nationally. As with younger students, the proportion gaining higher grades is below average although examples of high quality work

are produced. This is notably true among the sixth formers, some of whom develop highly individual responses to the set starting points.

- Overall, the students make the best progress when tasks have a clear purpose such as working from direct observation. They develop good skills in exploring the properties of different materials and techniques in both two and three dimensions and on a range of scales.
- They are less successful when refining and developing their work because they do not always understand the key features of successful outcomes. This leaves some students, notably boys, too dependent on teachers for guidance. The situation is compounded on occasion by limited vocabulary with which to talk or think about ideas. Both of these factors hinder students in reaching high examination grades.

## Quality of teaching and learning in art and design

Teaching and learning in art and design are good.

- The teachers are enthusiastic and work well as a team. The students are well known and teachers' relationships with them are positive.
- Lessons contain a good variety of well-paced activities which sustain students' attention and ensure that learning builds logically.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge, confidently demonstrating processes or talking about other artists' work. They make good use of their own experience as creative people to support students' learning.
- Discussion is used well with individuals and whole classes to focus students on learning. However some opportunities are missed to challenge students and develop their higher level thinking about what they are doing and what the next steps in their work might be.
- The students' progress over time is monitored well. Underachievement is identified and tackled effectively with extra support provided for example in completion of coursework folders at GCSE and A-level.
- Students are given good feedback by teachers through marking. They have good opportunities to record their own ideas for improvement.
- Careers and options guidance is good. Students value it and feel well prepared when making option choices and for further study in the subject after leaving the school.

## Quality of the curriculum

The curriculum in art and design is good.

- The students are offered a well-balanced range of experiences which appeal equally to all groups and build learning progressively.
- Curriculum development is well managed in response to external demands, such as the new Key Stage 3 National Curriculum, and monitoring of students' responses to schemes of work.
- There is a good range of themes and starting points with a structured introduction to established genres such as still-life for younger students leading logically to more open-ended projects at GCSE and A-level.
- Students experience a good balance of art, craft and design processes although too little use is made of information and communication technology (ICT) as a creative medium.
- The curriculum is enriched by a good range of gallery and museum visits, including to overseas destinations for sixth form students.

- The art club is popular and a useful venue for students wishing to get extra support with their work or who want to extend it further.

## Leadership and management of art and design

The leadership and management of art and design are good.

- The subject leader is energetic in leading the department and works well with her team and with those leading the Expressive Arts faculty.
- A good range of monitoring activities, including data analysis and work scrutiny, gives her a good understanding of strengths and weaknesses. Effective action is taken where improvements are required.
- Subject development priorities are good. They are largely measurable and relate well to those for the school as a whole.
- Professional development of staff is well planned in relation to individual needs and those of the department.
- The subject leader and her colleagues work hard to forge links with external partners such as museums and galleries and with local schools and other organisations.

Subject issue: the extent to which students 'learn to think and act as artists, craftspeople and designers, working creatively and intelligently' and 'develop an appreciation of art, craft and design, and its role in the creative and cultural industries that enrich their lives' is judged to be good.

- The students are introduced early to the working methods of other creative practitioners. They make good progress, from below average starting points, in understanding that people working in art, craft and design are part of a continuum and build on the work of others.
- Students make good progress in using research and exploration techniques to support their studies. Sketchbooks are a well-established aspect of the department's work and are valued by students.
- They make good progress in learning to decode and use the work of other creative practitioners to support their own activity although some require considerable support when thinking about the ideas involved.
- Older students identify risk-taking and inventiveness as synonymous with creative practice, reflecting the good progress in understanding what creative practitioners do as a result of the good support of staff.
- Visits to galleries and museums play a strong role in developing students' awareness of creative practice. Nevertheless they have too few opportunities to work directly with creative practitioners to see what they do at first hand.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- improve the ability of students, notably boys, to talk about and refine their work independently from an earlier stage
- give students more experience of ICT as a creative medium and opportunities to work with artists.

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.

Ofsted gathers information on the immediate and longer-term impact of survey inspections, both on the institutions themselves, and with a view to improving its own processes. To this end, I should be grateful if you would complete the attached questionnaire and return it within the next ten days. We have also just sent a copy of the questionnaire by email. Please return your completed questionnaire to either the email or postal address on the form, not to me. We may also contact some schools by telephone after several months in order for us to gain a picture of longer-term impact. Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Long  
Her Majesty's Inspector