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Dear Mrs Whiteley

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Art and design

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of the staff and pupils, during my visit on 27 January 2009 to evaluate your work in art and design.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the subject, the visit also evaluated how effectively the school used the work of different artists, craftworkers and designers to 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: visits to classrooms to discuss displays with pupils, analysis of additional work in the school gallery, interviews with you, the subject leader and groups of pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, and observations of lessons in the Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.

The overall effectiveness of art and design was judged satisfactory with good features.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are satisfactory.

- On entry, children's creative skills generally meet expectations for their age. Children use their imagination through role play and make-believe

and to explore new materials, media and processes. They develop the confidence to discover and interest to sustain activity.

- Between Years 1 and 2 pupils develop their skills systematically achieving satisfactory standards across a range of two and three dimensional media. However, their bold seascapes show a good quality of colour mixing and painting when supported by experimentation in the classroom and first hand experience of a visit to the coast.
- Between Years 3 and 6 pupils make the expected progress in the subject and reach targets typical of their age, ability and context and in some projects exceed them. For example, their colour work, composition and brush control builds on their earlier strengths to create good quality landscapes in Years 5 and 6.
- Boys and girls use their observation and imagination effectively. Their ability to abstract design from observation is a strength of work in a range of two dimensional media. Their skill in building up surface texture leads to intricate and effective work.
- Three dimensional work is of a satisfactory standard. However, stone carvings created by Year 6 pupils with local sculptor Simon Kent, during a visit to the secondary school, are of good quality and show that the pupils are capable of meeting high expectations.
- There is limited evidence of pupils' analysis of different artists, craftworkers and designers, ability to review, modify and evaluate their work, or development of drawing skills in and out of school due to their limited use of, or understanding about, sketchbooks.
- A display by Year 3 pupils in French, expressing their favourite subjects, show that art and design lessons are popular. Discussions with pupils in all years revealed their enthusiasm for learning how to use art media and develop specialist vocabulary, which they do well.
- Pupils express views confidently and critically about the work of other artists, including their peers. They are proud of their own achievements. The good ideas about developing the subject that pupils shared during the visit, for example by incorporating the 'Redwood tree logo' into the unit of work about trees in art, should be harnessed.

Quality of teaching and learning of art and design

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

- Lessons are efficiently organised and well resourced. Some teachers use their displays particularly well as a stimulus, for example by using provocative questions alongside images or using artefacts which promote curiosity. In the Foundation Stage a Chinese dragon mask inspired children to make and perform with their own dragon puppet.
- A consistent strength of teaching is the use of the subject to extend pupils' language skills. Teachers' explanations of technical language by using well chosen examples are effective. For example, a Year 2 pupil accurately referred to 'hue' when discussing his colour mixing.
- Whilst some lessons promote pupils' wider skills well, not all pupils remain clear about particular art and design objectives. Specific areas

of subject knowledge, understanding or skills identified in planning could be more explicit in order to help pupils evaluate their progress.

- Teachers manage pupils' behaviour effectively. In all lessons seen, pupils' behaviour was good and they used tools and materials carefully. Training and support by the subject leader have a positive impact on the confidence of teachers and support staff and the level of challenge.
- Lesson planning is satisfactory overall. A good example of planning took account of the 'Every Child Matters' outcomes by linking a lesson about clay decoration to 'being a pottery designer' revealing to pupils how the subject can contribute to future economic well-being.
- Teachers' ongoing assessment informs their judgements about pupils' achievement in different aspects of the subject. These are reported to parents. Teachers consciously teach pupils how to revisit prior learning. Nevertheless, some lessons use the same starting points for pupils with widely varying ability and could introduce more choice.

Quality of the curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory.

- The curriculum enables teachers and learners to meet the objectives of the Foundation Stage and the National Curriculum. The natural and built environment, human experience and imagination are encountered in all years. Art, craft and design from different cultures is explored through specific events which include visiting artists.
- A good curriculum overview and progression ladder provides teachers with clear guidance about how to promote pupils' development. However, the impact on standards is most evident where supported by staff training, for example teaching about 'colour' across the school.
- The curriculum provides clear opportunities for pupils to revisit prior learning and to work in mixed-media. This is a good strategy that is not fully impacting on pupils' work by exploring combinations of materials, techniques or different artists' work already understood.
- Pupils' first hand experiences have a significant impact on pupils' achievements. For example, visits to Roche Abbey and Bridlington are used well to teach pupils how to record from observation. However, more regular emphasis should be given to pupils' mark-making and drawing as a key subject skill.
- Whilst there are no specific extension activities for pupils who are particularly creative there are additional opportunities for pupils to pursue particular interests. For example, a group of pupils were observed working on an animation project at lunch time in preparation for a local competition. A challenging workshop at the secondary school had also motivated pupils with learning difficulties.

Leadership and management of art and design

Leadership and management in art and design are satisfactory with some good features.

- The subject leader has proven impact on raising standards in art, craft and design. Her focus on teaching and learning about colour throughout the school is effective due to clear guidance, staff training and related display work which informs monitoring and evaluation.
- The school's art policy is a succinct and workable document which provides a clear expression of subject aims. Whilst the presence of display throughout the school provides opportunities for the subject leader to evaluate outcomes the lack of sketchbooks and opportunities to observe teaching, restrict evaluation of learning and progress.
- A well informed curriculum overview, and schemes of work adapted to the school provide teachers with direction without restricting opportunities to interpret their own lessons. Where teachers have the confidence to work to their own strengths standards are higher.
- The school gallery maintained by the subject leader provides a good focal point for staff, pupils and parents to appreciate best work. Pupils also appreciate opportunities to see their efforts rewarded in 'special mention' assemblies. However, photographic images of pupils' work in the subject handbook do not indicate different levels of achievement.
- A systematic approach to assessment in art, craft and design has been introduced effectively by the subject leader. A good feature is that pupils' progress in different aspects of the subject is tracked. This provides clear opportunities for teachers to support pupils in developing their strengths and targeting their weaknesses.
- The subject improvement plan provides an adequate indication of priorities but the strategies to address them are not always clear. For example, the school is involved in schemes such as the 'Take One Picture' initiative which could be linked, as an opportunity to address the inconsistencies identified, in teachers' subject knowledge.

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

- The range of work across the school provides sufficient opportunities for pupils to appreciate the work of artists, craftworkers and designers. However, opportunities for pupils to interpret, individually and creatively what they see and learn about, are inconsistent.
- The school's gallery of work by different pupils provides a diverse range of examples for pupils to aspire to. This resource is particularly successful in promoting pupils' perception of themselves as artists. Where expectations of pupils link clearly to the work of other artists their creativity is promoted. For example, colour used by the artist David Hockney in his landscapes liberated the pupils' own use.

Areas of good practice to disseminate, included:

- progression in teaching and learning about colour
- the impact of first hand experience on pupils' achievement and standards
- assessments supporting pupils' progress in different aspects of the subject.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include the need to:

- develop the use of sketchbooks as sourcebooks of ideas, observations, analyses and experiments
- increase opportunities for the most creative young artists to pursue more personalised work
- extend the effective focus on colour to other visual and tactile elements of art, craft and design.

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. I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop art and design across the school.

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

Ian Middleton
Her Majesty's Inspector