

Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404040  
F 020 7421 6855  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



21 May 2009

Ms B Bleasdale  
Headteacher  
Blessed Trinity RC College  
Coal Clough Lane  
Ormerod Road  
Burnley  
Lancashire  
BB11 5BT

Dear Ms Bleasdale

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Art and design

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 18 and 19 May 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 the impact of the new secondary subject curriculum that challenges you to develop students who 'think and act like artists, craftworkers and designers, working creatively and intelligently'.

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 from all year groups and observations of four lessons.

Art and design

The overall effectiveness was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards in art and design

Achievement and standards are good.

- Students at Key Stage 3 make good progress. They are keen to learn, apply themselves very well in lessons and are able to understand the key elements of the subject. For example, in Year 8, students were

able to demonstrate their understanding by distinguishing between the elements of symmetry and asymmetry in a lesson about the influences in Art Deco.

- Students acquire good skills in the use of colour, imagination, and in the development of drawing and printmaking techniques. They produce sensitive and personal drawing studies that show development over time. They use watercolour and pastel media with confidence. There are examples of exceptional work from individual students. Work is well presented in displays, homework, sketchbooks and studio work. The Year 8 small scale 3D studies of cubist constructions show potential for development into other media and scale.
- Students show a growing awareness of their creative development. At both key stages they have a particularly good understanding of what they need to work on to improve further.
- The subject maintains a high level of popularity as an option. Examination results for GCSE are good overall. Boys, who are well represented, also achieve well at A-C grades. There are high results for some of the individual GCSE groups, above the national average.
- In Years 10 and 11, students acquire the confidence and skills to produce individual and original work which shows a deeper understanding of the creative process. Colour work has a 'freshness', showing good confidence in a range of media use, including attractive multimedia montages using textiles.
- Individual students produce some lively projects. For example, by drawing inspiration from 1960's 'mod' culture in a contemporary way, combined with research into French film graphics and fashion of the time. However, some students remain dependent for source material on that provided by the teacher, limiting their personal development.
- Students' application and attention during lessons are very good. They have a good rapport with their teachers. Students' comment positively on the calm atmosphere and their enjoyment of art and design.

## Quality of teaching and learning in art and design

Teaching and learning in art and design are good.

- The successful features of lessons are linked to thorough planning and effective assessment. Teachers are skilful in managing behaviour and learning. Aims and objectives are clear at the beginning and at progress points during the lesson, contributing to students' concentration and progression. However, there is scope for more creative 'risk taking' to stimulate group and larger scale work.
- Teachers use their own work and visual resources effectively to inspire students in the use of various media and to promote their understanding of critical and visual references. Teachers place high emphasis on students completing additional homework and extension studies. Students benefit from well informed individual guidance from their teachers, all of whom are specialists.
- 'Assessment for learning' is rigorous at both key stages. Self-evaluation is well established, written comments on students' creativity, how to improve further and make progress are critical but friendly in tone.

## Quality of the curriculum in art and design

The curriculum in art and design is good.

- The new curriculum has been reviewed for Key Stage 3 and mapped against the new requirements. It offers a wider range of experience to encourage creativity, understanding and skills in 2D and some 3D media. The use of the local environment to stimulate individual imagery at Key Stage 3 is an area with further potential for development.
- Digital media is not used in art currently. However, in graphic design art students have produced well designed packaging.
- Projects and activities in the schemes of work and lessons integrate effectively critical references from other artists' work to support creative development. However, there is further potential to use more contemporary design sources, including more direct involvement by visiting artists, craft workers and designers.
- A key focus of the subject leader is to encourage more independence in the way students approach their work. This is facilitated by after school and lunchtime workshops which help students to explore their work in more depth.

## Leadership and management of art and design

The leadership and management of art and design are good.

- The quality assurance subject review and analysis of performance by school managers is accurate and realistic.
- 'Student voice' is very well captured through questionnaires for every student and by student representatives whose views are regarded as important and inform further improvement. Parents are kept well informed about students' progress.
- Subject staff have succeeded in maintaining a good creative environment for their students through effective communication and organisation during transition to new accommodation, merging two existing sites into one in 2010.
- Resources are generally managed well. For example, technician support has a positive impact on students' experience of printmaking. The relatively short time allocation for art and design lessons and large group sizes at Key Stage 3 are managed successfully.
- Individual staff keep good records and projects are interpreted to maximise their areas of expertise. The evaluation of these projects across the team promotes further refinement for future work.

Subject issue: the impact of the new secondary curriculum on students' ability to 'think and act like artists, working creatively and intelligently'.

This is satisfactory.

- The curriculum has been reviewed for Key Stage 3 and mapped against the new requirements,
- Students' understanding about how the subject can be applied is evident in their involvement in a number of competitions. For example, Year 9 Burnley Sports Partnership and the design of Christmas cards. Year 7 students worked together on a large scale painting for Liturgical Day.
- Experiences of visits to or by creative practitioners are limited. However, an artist in residence is planned for the summer term.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- extend visits and sustain contact with practising artists, craftworkers and designers to increase students' awareness and understanding of the creative industries
- raise expectations of students in relation to preparing visual references that reflect their personal insights and experiences in order to promote their independence. For example, exploring perceptions of the locality.

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

Sandra Tweedie  
Additional Inspector