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Mrs J Wheeldon  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Wheeldon

Ofsted 2009-10 subject survey inspection programme: art, craft and design

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and pupils, during my visit on 19 January 2010 to look at work in art, craft 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 pupils learn to draw with confidence and 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.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included discussions with pupils and staff, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work, and observation of three lessons and the Reception class.

The overall effectiveness of art, craft and design is satisfactory.

Achievement in art, craft and design

Achievement in art, craft and design is satisfactory.

- From typical starting points in the Nursery, children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Inside and outdoors children play energetically because creative activities are tempting and exciting. As they move into Year 1, most children are working securely within the early learning goals for creative development although few exceed them.
- Pupils make steady and sustained progress through the rest of the school. Standards are generally in line with national expectations.

- All pupils' behave excellently and use tools and materials with considerable care and respect. They work productively in lessons.

#### Quality of teaching of art, craft and design

The quality of teaching of art, craft and design is satisfactory.

- Teaching is well organised and structured to make the best use of time.
- A secure system for assessing pupils' overall attainment is in place. However, some assessments are imprecise because outcomes are not yet moderated to ensure consistency across year groups.
- Some activities are not matched closely enough to pupils' needs and abilities but they receive appropriate support and guidance.
- Pupils are encouraged to evaluate their work and are directed towards recognising quality in their own work and others'.
- Some very creative approaches are used to encourage pupils to fire their imagination to use in their work. Music and movement are used poignantly to set the scene before work commences.

#### Quality of the curriculum in art, craft and design

The quality of the art, craft and design curriculum is satisfactory.

- The curriculum for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. The Forest School provides an excellent outdoor environment that stimulates children's senses; inspiring activities enable children to express their creativity as they draw upon their imagination.
- Cross-curricular links are developing satisfactorily to promote pupils' interest, engagement and understanding of art in the context of other subjects.
- There is ample opportunity for all pupils to access the full range of curriculum opportunities including gallery visits, artists-in-residence and art clubs.
- The curriculum is not adapted sufficiently to meet pupils' individual needs, especially the most able and those with special gifts and talents.
- School-based exhibitions and participation in local art-based events are prized by pupils, their families and staff and enable pupils to make a good contribution to the community.

#### Effectiveness of leadership and management in art, craft and design

Leadership and management of art, craft and design are satisfactory.

- The subject is valued highly in the school and led with passion to promote creativity.

- Since its recent re-designation as a primary school, the challenge of extending leadership skills across a wider age range is being met with positive attitude and resolve.
- The school has identified that for some staff, especially those who are teaching unfamiliar age groups, subject knowledge is a priority for professional development.
- Monitoring is regular but not always sufficiently focused on how effectively teaching promotes successful learning and achievement.
- Collections of work and photographs provide helpful guidance for staff on curriculum coverage and ideas for future planning. These are not yet levelled or annotated to provide teachers with an overview of progression or to exemplify National Curriculum attainment levels.
- Subject coordination has an impact on communicating high expectations through eye-catching displays around the school.

Subject issue: How effectively do pupils learn to draw with confidence and creativity?

Pupils learn to draw satisfactorily.

- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children draw everything for themselves and do so boldly and confidently.
- Work seen on display and in pupils' sketchbooks shows that their drawing develops competently over time. Outcomes are broadly satisfactory by the end of Year 6.
- Sketchbooks are underused to practise, experiment and explore so that pupils build a personal repertoire of techniques to refer to and use in future work.
- There is a lack of focus on the systematic development of drawing skills in different curriculum contexts.

Examples of good practice, which we discussed, include:

- the provision for creative development in the Forest School.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- improving the consistency and quality of teaching and learning to raise achievement by ensuring that:
  - teachers develop a secure understanding of progression
  - curriculum planning reflects systematic teaching of skills tailored to pupils' needs and capabilities
  - accuracy in assessment is achieved through regular moderation
- deepening pupils' knowledge and refining their skills by:
  - using sketchbooks regularly for a wider range of purposes

- developing subject leadership by:
  - focusing monitoring activities on pupils' achievement.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop art, craft 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