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Mrs D Berry  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Berry

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 10 February 2010, with David Knighton HMI, 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: interviews with staff, a local artist and groups of pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of five lessons.

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

Achievement in art, craft and design

Achievement in art, craft and design is good.

- Boys and girls make good progress from the start. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, they develop their creativity with confidence. When they leave Reception, many children are able to make informed choices about the use of different media. They work carefully when developing their mark-making skills and expressively when working on a large scale in the outside area.

- In Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, attain standards at or above those typically expected, particularly in their two-dimensional work. For example, they use their understanding of colour mixing and colour symbolism to capture observations and convey feelings effectively.
- Pupils use sketchbooks successfully to experiment with different materials, research and revisit ideas. For example, Year 6 pupils had constructed special sketchbooks to contain their work about Henry Moore. Three-dimensional exploration is infrequent, but the impressive 'Gruffalos' displayed in the Early Years Foundation Stage show pupils' capabilities.
- Pupils enjoy their learning, concentrating well in lessons and talking about their work, and that of other pupils, with insight and pride. They are inquisitive when shown the work of other artists, including practising artists who have visited the school. Pupils include technical words in the range of vocabulary used to describe, compare and contrast work.

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

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

- Lessons are taught with enthusiasm, engaging pupils' interest quickly through effective use of display and/or computer-aided stimuli. Teachers use an excellent balance of images and artefacts created by adults with examples of children's work. In one lesson, the teacher skilfully shifted the emphasis from a group evaluation of their shoe studies to an analysis of Van Gogh's painting of shoes, having equipped the pupils well to criticise.
- Subject-specific objectives enable teachers to ensure that pupils make good progress whether taught in a lesson devoted to the subject or in a cross-curricular context. The clarity of teachers, support staff and pupils about the purpose of the lesson enables them to evaluate improvements made or needed. The use of assessment over time is underdeveloped, limiting the building of challenges as pupils progress through the school.
- Teachers and support staff provide clear guidance to pupils while nurturing their independence. Knowledge about individual pupils is used well to target questions and focus support in lessons. Good emphasis is also given to encouraging different responses to a shared starting point, for example by using a range of images to stimulate pupils' imagination.

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

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

- The curriculum has been planned thoughtfully to ensure that pupils acquire new subject skills each year. Drawing and painting skills are reinforced particularly well through regular practice. Pupils' knowledge about different artists' use of similar media or subject matter is integrated well. There is less emphasis on the work of craftworkers and designers.
- Practising artists contribute to pupils' understanding about art in the contemporary world and in the past. For example, a project for particularly

talented pupils linked to a museums and galleries collection. The school is planning to sustain further links with local artists and galleries to ensure that all pupils experience original work first hand.

- Opportunities to develop pupils' art, craft and design skills, knowledge and understanding within other contexts are used well. Links between work undertaken in school and at home with the support of parents/carers, contribute to pupils' application of learning in the subject.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in art, craft and design

Leadership and management in art, craft and design are good.

- Subject documentation supports school aims clearly. Reference to local authority and national guidance is used well to ensure that provision and outcomes are comparable with good practice. Collaboration with a cluster of local primary schools also contributes to effective subject leadership.
- Effective monitoring and evaluation of planning, lessons and pupils' work ensure that improvement planning is well informed. The views of staff and pupils are collected systematically. The involvement of Year 6 pupils as ambassadors for the subject during the visit was informative. Staff training is valued and the impact on teachers' confidence evident.
- The role of art, craft and design in promoting pupils' creative development is understood by senior and middle leaders, teaching and support staff. Pupils considered to show creative behaviours are challenged through additional provision, such as artist-led workshops. However, systematic assessment, particularly of creative development, does not fully build on the good practice observed in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Subject issue: How effectively pupils learn to draw confidently and creatively

This aspect is good.

- Pupils gain confidence in using drawing to respond to first-hand experiences and to explore and develop ideas. Sketchbooks play an important part in storing pupils' mark-making and drawings, providing a source of reference in subsequent work. Teachers and support staff explain the importance of techniques well, for example how to observe. There are no links currently established with national drawing initiatives.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- enabling more pupils to aspire to, and create outstanding achievements by:
  - establishing a coherent approach to subject assessment that enables staff to pitch challenges, particularly for highly creative pupils

- sustaining links with galleries and artists, craftworkers and designers to ensure that pupils are well informed about what is possible.

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

As I explained previously, 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

Ian Middleton  
Her Majesty's Inspector