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Mr M Willcock
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Willcock

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

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 12 January 2010 to look at 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, analysis of pupils' work, scrutiny of documentation, and observation of four lessons; one in the Early Years Foundation Stage, one in Key Stage 1 and two in Key Stage 2.

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

Achievement in art, craft and design

Achievement in art, craft and design is good.

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with generally below average levels of development in their creative skills. They make good progress and achieve broadly average standards by the time they enter Key Stage 1. They continue to make good progress and reach at least satisfactory and often good standards by the end of Year 6. This is because of the inclusive, 'can do' culture that is at the heart of the good

curriculum and the effective support and encouragement provided by staff to all pupils.

- From an early age, pupils experiment with a wide range of materials and media. They develop ideas well through direct observation and learn to manipulate and use the tools of artists well. They are encouraged to successfully represent their feelings and ideas through images and in the development of artefacts and whole-class collaborative activities.
- Pupils enthusiastically cite many examples of how they use experiences of visits to galleries, museums, the outside environment, the work of famous artists and working with contemporary artists to develop their skills and ideas.
- They are particularly proud of the work they produced following the artist and author, Korky Paul's visit to the school. Indeed, some pupils' art work has been used as end papers in his most recent book; Winnie's Amazing Pumpkin.

Quality of teaching of art, craft and design

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

- Excellent relationships between staff and pupils and pupils' exemplary behaviour typified all lessons observed. Teachers have good subject knowledge, are well motivated, skilled and enthusiastic. They transmit their enthusiasm successfully.
- Pupils say they thoroughly enjoy the diverse range of activities and materials they experience. As one pupil confidently said, 'Art frees you to express yourself and there are loads of ways to do it.' They say they are proud that their work is recognised through high-quality displays across the school and in the presentation of their work in public spaces within the local community.
- Lesson planning is detailed and structured well with clear learning objectives that build effectively on pupils' prior learning experiences. Informal assessment and dialogue with pupils are ongoing in lessons. This enables pupils to talk informatively about their work, their decisions and successes or how to improve it. Formal assessment procedures have been put in place recently and the school now has accurate information on how well pupils are doing. However, this information is not yet used in teachers' planning and this restricts pupils' opportunities to make even better progress.

Quality of the curriculum in art, craft and design

The art, craft and design curriculum is good.

- The curriculum has been well-developed and resourced over recent years to provide a good mix of discrete learning opportunities, cross-curricular work and specific themes that embrace all aspects of the creative and performing arts. Such an approach assures there is always something to

interest and excite pupils as well as to develop their skills further. It also assures that children can develop and practise skills in a variety of subject areas.

- Collaboration with Creative Partnership, visits out of school, and a range of artists with whom the children work enrich the curriculum significantly. Coverage and progression are good in both two- and three-dimensional art, working in different scales, through direct observation and imaginative art as well as landscapes, portrait and abstract art and craft.
- The use of information and communication technology in art is developing well and pupils have good opportunities to experiment and achieve in image-making, photography, film-making and animation.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in art, craft and design

Leadership and management of art and design are good.

- You have a longstanding, strong commitment and drive to the subject area. The coordinator continues this tradition through her leadership of the subject. Together, you share your enthusiasm successfully with colleagues and pupils alike. The subject leader makes sure she is up to date with new initiatives and ideas through regular networking with other coordinators locally and secures external support and advice when necessary.
- Governance of the subject is also good. There is positive and proactive involvement of the link art-governor in the continuing and successful development of art across the curriculum. Through this relationship and leaders' accurate self-evaluation, governors have a good understanding of the strengths and the areas for improvement of the subject and the effectiveness to which resources are deployed.
- Areas for improvement are reflected within the school's succinct development plan and link well to the whole-school aims. Informal and formal lesson observations and monitoring of pupils' work are ongoing to make sure that pupils' prior experiences are built upon and developed. However, teachers' lesson plans do not yet use the assessment information available to ensure lessons can always challenge pupils even further.

Subject issue

The development of pupils' confidence and creativity through drawing is good.

- The quality of drawing is often good because of the progressive way that skills are taught and the many opportunities available to practise and develop those skills in a variety of contexts and for different purposes. Additionally, the school has developed a culture from the very earliest stages that children have a 'can do' attitude to their art and are encouraged to take risks and experiment.

- Pupils describe enthusiastically how they use and develop their drawing skills in their work; as one pupil said, 'we learn to draw in many lessons'. They are provided with a wide range of drawing techniques, tools and materials in which to experiment, make decisions and discover for themselves the best ones to develop their ideas.
- Sketch books are used to good effect in some classes, and there is evidence of pupils' increasing ability to practise their skills, reflect upon their work and consider what they can do to improve it further. However, the school is aware that there is a need for their use to be consistently good across the school and actions are in place to tackle this.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring the assessment information about pupils' progress is used in teachers' planning to make sure pupils are always challenged to achieve the highest possible standards in their work.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop the subject in the school.

As 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 made available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Farrow
Her Majesty's Inspector