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15 March 2010

Mr A Denton
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Denton

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 4 March 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: interviews with staff and pupils and a representative from Telford Culture Zone; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of four lessons.

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

Achievement in art, craft and design

Pupils' achievement in art, craft and design is satisfactory.

- Pupils' attainment on entry is variable. They make satisfactory progress reaching expected levels by the end of Key Stage 2. Few pupils exceed national targets because the work is insufficiently challenging for the most able.

- In the Reception class, children's drawing is broadly typical. They are not yet mixing colour confidently and the use of templates and ready-cut materials constrains their creative development.
- In lessons, pupils are cooperative although too passive because choice and autonomy are too limited.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress with appropriate support in lessons to ensure their participation.
- Pupils say that they enjoy working in groups on special projects over time and working on a large scale. They talk about their work with pride.
- Pupils are able to recall famous artists that they have studied. One pupil described Lowry as 'clever' because his drawings are 'simple' but 'busy' and 'interesting'.
- In Year 6, pupils use their sketchbooks regularly to explore ideas and evaluate their work but across the school the quality is inconsistent.

Quality of teaching of art, craft and design

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

- The quality of lesson planning is inconsistent. Learning objectives relate directly to the National Curriculum and are phrased in child-friendly language. Where subjects are linked, the objectives relating to learning in art and design are not explicit enough.
- Assessment is regular and skills are evaluated through moderated work sampling. In the Reception class, children's attainment is monitored carefully in the Learning Journey files and the information used to plan the next steps.
- Information and communication technology is used satisfactorily to enhance teaching and learning.
- Studies of artists, designers and craftworkers, past and present, are used effectively as a source of inspiration.

Quality of the curriculum in art, craft and design

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

- The scheme of work ensures the systematic teaching of skills. However, it is not yet developed sufficiently to provide enough challenge in response to pupils' progress, especially in revisiting and applying existing knowledge, skills and understanding.
- The school has an impressive track record of pupils' involvement and engagement with living artists, craftworkers and designers through artists in residence and visits. Pupils' work is exhibited widely in a range of contexts locally.
- Pupils have access to art club and gifted and talented pupils are encouraged to participate in workshops run by external providers.

- Identified links are made to learning in this subject elsewhere in the curriculum. Pupils commented that they find this way of working enjoyable.

Effectiveness of leadership and management of art, craft and design

The leadership and management of art, craft and design are satisfactory.

- Art, craft and design is valued and pupils' involvement in creative activities a priority, illustrated by success in achieving the Artsmark Silver award.
- Changes of leadership have been managed well. The improvement plan is fit for purpose but not yet linked closely enough to outcomes for pupils.
- Strategic decisions to moderate and level work as a whole ensure that all teachers develop secure assessment skills. Training is regular and often provided by creative practitioners.
- Links with creative partnerships are good. The school is a leading contributor to the annual Telford Arts Festival that involves the local community.

Subject issue: how effectively pupils learn to draw with confidence and creativity

Pupils' learning about how to draw with confidence and creativity is satisfactory.

- Pupils draw from memory, imagination and observation across a range of subjects. The quality of work in sketchbooks is variable. Some good drawing is evident in Year 6, especially following visits to places of interest.
- Teachers lack awareness of progression in drawing which inhibits effective curriculum planning.

Examples of good practice

- Artists in residence and visits are used effectively to promote learning.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- accelerating pupils' progress and raising attainment by ensuring that:
 - pupils use sketchbooks regularly to improve their drawing skills and develop a repertoire of new techniques
 - curriculum planning provides sufficient challenge for all pupils and identifies clear opportunities for them to develop new skills and to review, refine and apply existing ones.

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

Linda Killman
Her Majesty's Inspector