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Mrs J Cooper
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Cooper

Ofsted 2010-11 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 6 May 2010 to look at work in art, craft and design.

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, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of eight lessons, including four lessons observed jointly with the subject leader.

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.

- From below average starting points, children's creative development is good during the Reception Year because of the individualised support provided. Most reach the level expected by the time they join Year 1.
- Progress between Years 1 and 6 is satisfactory. Pupils enjoy the subject, behave well and show positive attitudes to learning in lessons. However, their individual needs are not met as well as in the Reception Year.
- Pupils make satisfactory progress in exploring the properties of different processes. They enjoy finding out what paint or collage can do but are not always supported well enough to refine their control of them. Where teaching is more effective, such as when Year 5 worked with a film-maker,

they made good progress in learning about camera techniques and editing.

- Satisfactory skills are developed in working from direct experience, such as through observational drawing. Pupils value working this way but do not consistently explore different approaches deeply enough. For example, Year 6 pupils drew objects with various materials but lacked confidence in exploiting the qualities of each to analyse and investigate the objects.
- Pupils' evaluation and refinement of ideas are satisfactory. They are keen to develop individual responses, including by using drawing as a tool for thinking and planning. Some innovative and interesting ideas are developed, including for homework. However, on occasion, pupils are not sufficiently sure of the characteristics of effective work to push their ideas forward. Regular reference is made to work by other artists but pupils' understanding of the work seen sometimes lacks the depth to fully support their own learning.

Quality of teaching of art, craft and design

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

- Teachers work hard to prepare lessons so that resources are effectively organised, classrooms are well set up for practical work and displays are used to reflect areas of learning. They manage behaviour well. The stimulus provided for learning is often engaging, such as a Year 2 class who drew from an actor dressed up as a Norman knight.
- Lesson activities build logically on the prior learning of classes as a whole. Some lessons are planned well to meet the needs of pupils of varying abilities, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This is most evident in the Reception class, but less consistent in later years where accurate information about each pupil's attainment is not used fully.
- Introductions by teachers to processes and/or the work of other artists are satisfactory. Although there are examples of good practice, techniques are not always modelled effectively or key features of artists' work are not explained properly. This hinders the refinement of pupils' work because they are not always sure of what they are aiming to achieve.
- Feedback and guidance to pupils are satisfactory overall. Marking in books and verbal feedback are regular with some examples of good individual discussions in lessons. Teachers sometimes miss opportunities to check the progress made in lessons, for example through questioning groups and individual pupils to test and extend their understanding.

Quality of the curriculum in art, craft and design

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

- Pupils have access to a good range of ways to work. These are planned well to involve working on different scales using two and three dimensional processes in art, craft and design disciplines. Pupils have good

opportunities to draw in different ways, including from observation, memory and imagination.

- Good steps are taken to enrich pupils' experiences through work with a partner secondary school. For example, some pupils attend sessions to work on the Arts Council England 'Arts Award'.
- Enrichment of the subject, such as through an 'artsweek' and after-school clubs, is good. The school is in the process of becoming a centre for the Arts Award to support these activities further.
- There have been a good number of activities in recent years where pupils have worked with practising artists. The school has recognised the value of these, but also that too few have offered pupils sustained opportunities to experience artists' work at first hand. In response, a link has been established with a local gallery and there are good plans to extend this in support of pupils' learning.
- Subject learning is often linked to cross-curricular themes which pupils enjoy and value. These make useful connections between the subject and other curriculum areas, for example when Year 4 pupils learnt about hot and cold colours, linked to studying temperature in science.

Effectiveness of leadership and management of art, craft and design

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

- Subject leaders are committed and hard working. This has resulted in improvements to the curriculum, to growing links with external partners and sharper assessment of pupils' progress over time.
- Staff work well as a team to develop resources and the subject is valued in the school. Professional development is regular with some, but not all, training opportunities making a sustained impact on teachers' expertise.
- Priorities for further development relate well to most of the areas requiring attention. Nevertheless, there is too little detail about how improvements will be brought about, for example to teaching, or clarity in citing success criteria so that progress can be measured.
- Monitoring and evaluation are satisfactory with areas of strength. Good attention is paid to assessment data and work scrutiny to check pupils' progress. Checking the quality of teaching is not systematic enough to improve its impact on learning.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- improving the impact of teaching by:
 - enhancing teachers' skills in modelling practical processes and explaining key features of artists' work to pupils
 - ensuring activities in lessons are more accurately matched to pupils' individual needs
- improving the impact of subject leaders by:

- monitoring more closely the quality of learning in lessons and using the outcomes to improve teaching
- ensuring development plans include clear success criteria and more detail about the steps required to bring about improvement.

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 under the URN for your school. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Long
Her Majesty's Inspector