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Mrs M Heard
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Dear Mrs Heard

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 24 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 lessons observed jointly with you and 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.

- Pupils make satisfactory progress overall from low starting points. In Year 3, boys and girls respond enthusiastically but, nevertheless, tentatively to open-ended opportunities to express their creativity. Their confidence in handling tools and experimenting with art media is very limited. Within the structure of their sketchbooks, pupils' mark-making develops very well but applying skills to observational or larger scale work remains a challenge.
- In Years 4 to 6, pupils, including the high proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities, progress satisfactorily in their control of two- and three-dimensional and digital media. There are particular strengths, for example their 'growing sewing' in Year 4 following in-depth exploration of autumn colour, but their limited confidence constrains their

ability to express their feelings, pursue ideas independently or use techniques spontaneously.

- Across all years, pupils develop a sound knowledge and understanding of art from different times and places. Their insights into the work of contemporary artists through projects that remain part of the school environment, or artists whose work is analysed by all classes as part of the National Gallery 'Take one picture' initiative, show that pupils are able to evaluate the work of others, but they are less skilled at evaluating their own.
- Pupils behave well in lessons. They work safely, thoughtfully, and cooperatively. The school's own questionnaire indicates that the subject is a particular favourite among girls and this is reflected in attendance figures at art club. However, the participation and performance of boys during the visit indicate that the school's strategies to ensure that different groups are equally engaged are proving effective.

Quality of teaching of art, craft and design

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

- Teachers and teaching assistants build supportive relationships with pupils. Whole-class activities and group work are managed well. Staff use the school's assessment information effectively to monitor the progress of individual pupils, including those who find learning in the subject difficult or others attaining particularly high standards. However, more use could be made of assessment information to pitch levels of challenge in lessons.
- Lessons are well resourced, including the use of computers as a tool for teaching and learning. Where particular strategies are used to embed pupils' understanding, progress is accelerated. For example, in the well-designed questions for pupils to consider when analysing the work of other artists or the demonstration of a technique clearly linked to the example of an artists' style. Nevertheless, some lesson objectives shared with pupils are complicated.

Quality of the curriculum in art, craft and design

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

- The curriculum introduces pupils to a wide range of experiences including drawing, painting, printmaking, ceramics, textiles and digital media. It is less effective structuring in-depth or mixed media work to consolidate their earlier achievements. However, a strength is the meaningful subject work in different curriculum contexts, for example learning about resist techniques in textiles as part of 'Black History Week'.
- Links with art galleries and museums are effective in refreshing staff's subject knowledge and providing a shared focus across the school. For example, during the visit all pupils had responded to Andrea del Verocchio's 'Tobias and the Angel'. However, pupils' limited first-hand

experience of original work created by artists, craft makers and designers including other children, constrains aspirations about what is possible.

Effectiveness of leadership and management of art, craft and design

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

- Subject monitoring is systematic and draws on a range of evidence in providing evaluative feedback to staff. The subject has a sound track record of tackling professional development needs, for example through ceramics workshops, soon to be extended to newly recruited staff. Subject self-evaluation is established, incorporating visual and performing arts which is being used as a basis for a future 'Artsmark' award.
- Priorities for improvement are appropriate, for example to develop the teaching of drawing and more consistent use of sketchbooks. Parents are able to share pupils' achievements through illustrated newsletters, creating an opportunity to engage their support. Regular involvement in external competitions and events adds to pupils' pride. While not yet impacting on raising standards, a visionary development is the subject's 'digital portfolio'.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- raising the standards attained in the subject by:
 - developing pupils' confidence, particularly in drawing and mark-making
 - teaching pupils how to evaluate their work, revisit and refine their skills
 - making aspirational work explicit by creative practitioners, including pupils,
- developing the subject curriculum by:
 - using the school building and surroundings to develop pupils' observation
 - raising the profile of the visual elements to help structure progression
 - making links with core subjects explicit to emphasise the relevance of skills.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop art, craft and design across 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 your next institutional inspection team.

Yours sincerely

Ian Middleton
Her Majesty's Inspector