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26 July 2010

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Dear Mr Wilson

Ofsted 2010–11 subject survey: identifying good practice in art, craft and design

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 13 July 2010 to look at work in art, craft and design, concentrating on how well pupils develop their confidence and creativity through drawing.

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 without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included lesson observations, scrutiny of work and discussions with pupils and staff. The visit focused on the impact of a drawing project entitled 'Active Learning' involving Year 1 and 2 pupils, their teacher and an artist. In addition, we looked at the wider dissemination of the project with other classes. The overall project involved 15 local primary schools and incorporated professional development funded by the local authority and led by the Campaign for Drawing.

Features of good practice

- Pupils have developed a greater enthusiasm for drawing as a result of a wide range of new approaches to the process. These included drawing together, working on a very large scale, drawing from memory and drawing onto photographs. The activities were planned well to ensure pupils had stimulating experiences about which to make drawings. For example, effective use was made of technology, such as an interactive whiteboard, to play sounds and show images.
- Building on the good start made in the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils made good progress in using drawing to explore their experiences and feelings. In particular, they learnt to use visual language, such as line,

shape and colour, to depict their emotional responses to the story of Scott's polar expedition and then in responding to their own environment.

- A significant element of the work done involved large scale collaborative pieces. Pupils took advantage of these opportunities to share and extend their ideas, enhance their social skills and their confidence in using subject-specific vocabulary to talk about their work.
- Through the extended nature of the drawing activities, pupils developed a good understanding of the benefit of returning to their work to think again and refine it, as creative practitioners often do. Nevertheless, they were not always able to capitalise on these opportunities because the intentions for the work did not develop clearly enough for them to assess their progress and define the next steps forward.
- Working alongside a practising artist enabled both pupils and staff to gain a better understanding of how drawing is used by creative practitioners. Pupils benefited from seeing approaches modelled first-hand and the teacher gained confidence in exploring drawing as a process herself.
- Effective teamwork between teacher and artist meant pupils understood well the role to be played by each. Pupils were clear that the teacher managed the activities and that the artist gave expert insight, although the teacher began to do this increasingly during the project with her developing confidence in using drawing.
- While pupils gained greater familiarity in drawing from memory, observation and imagination, opportunities were sometimes missed to clarify with them the possibilities arising from the different approaches.
- Both pupils and teacher responded well to the flexibility of the project where the nature of the drawing activities developed through discussion. Pupils said they became more interested in their learning and the teacher felt she was more innovative in her teaching.
- The project supported pupils well in using drawing more widely across the curriculum as a way of deepening their learning. For example, pupils explored different ways of making maps in geography and said this approach helped them to remember what they had learnt.
- The project has started making an impact on other classes. Effective staff development, led by the subject leader, means other teachers are increasingly confident in teaching drawing. Good progress is being made in ensuring staff are supported well in assessing pupils' progress, including through the creation of online folios of exemplar work.
- You gave significant support to the project because the approach adopted linked well with wider curriculum developments intended to give pupils greater skills in learning independently.
- Effective links with the local authority and the Campaign for Drawing were also enabling factors, principally in providing professional development for staff and brokering contact with the artist. You are aware that better planning is required with the secondary schools which pupils will attend to ensure progression in developing their drawing skills.

Areas for development

- Sharpen pupils' understanding of the different possibilities offered by drawing from memory, from direct experience and from the imagination so that they can exploit them fully.
- Enable pupils to make more informed decisions about how to move their work forward.
- Develop closer links through the subject with the secondary schools which pupils will attend to ensure progression in their drawing skills.

I hope that 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