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Mr R Jones
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Jones

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 25 January 2011 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 without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included: discussions with pupils, staff and a local artist; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of three lessons and of pupils working outdoors.

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

Achievement in art, craft and design

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

- From broadly typical starting points on entry, pupils make good progress in developing skills, knowledge and understanding. This is because teaching is good and strongly promotes pupils' development as independent, reflective and creative learners. Standards are above average and pupils' achievement is, therefore, good.
- Pupils use subject-specific language ably to articulate their ideas and to reflect on their own and others' work.
- The pupils study the work of artists from mainly White European countries which inspires and influences their own work without constraining it. Their knowledge of artists, designers and craftworkers from different continents and cultures is more limited.

- Pupils' drawing develops effectively through regular opportunities to draw from imagination and observation of natural and manufactured objects. Their representational drawings of people, plants and animals exceed age-related expectations, especially in Key Stage 1. Drawings seen in pupils' sketchbooks do not always reflect the good quality of the work seen in lessons and on display.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy the subject. They work equally well as independent learners and in collaboration with others. Their behaviour is outstanding in all respects. The subject strongly promotes pupils' advanced social and personal skills.

Quality of teaching of art, craft and design

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

- Teaching is inspiring and interesting. Teachers clearly enjoy teaching the subject and have high expectations for productivity.
- Teachers manage pupils skilfully in lessons. In particular, they expect pupils to demonstrate independence especially in retrieving their own resources and organising their work spaces.
- Teaching does not dictate the way in which pupils work or tackle barriers to success uniformly, so pupils learn effectively by trialling and modifying their ideas. Similarly, staff have clear aims and high expectations for learning but outcomes are not preconceived. Thus pupils produce original work confidently.
- Assessment is continuous throughout lessons and heightened individual support and guidance are offered accordingly. Staff provide helpful information for parents and carers about their children's achievement at the end of each year. However, an effective system of assessment is needed to for record information about pupils' varying strengths and weaknesses in the subject to promote even higher achievement.
- Relationships are excellent at all levels. Pupils thrive in a positive and encouraging learning environment where their successes are celebrated widely within the school community.
- All staff are deployed effectively to support and promote pupils' learning. The individual skills and talents of teaching and non-teaching staff are capitalised on and used to enhance pupils' learning opportunities.

Quality of the curriculum in art, craft and design

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

- The curriculum is broad and enriched extensively. Pupils pursue a wide range of art, craft and design from different places and times.
- Subjects are linked together adeptly so that pupils' develop their skills, knowledge and understanding in art and design through other subjects including modern foreign language, literacy and history.

- Local artists are used widely to enhance pupils' learning experiences. They contribute to design projects such as artwork for the school's letter-headed notepaper, information boards to explain the environmental trails and a pamphlet for the local church. Thus pupils develop a very secure understanding of the processes involved in design from the planning stages to professional production.
- Links with other schools and creative practitioners are well-developed and used advantageously to provide experiences which the school would not otherwise be in a position to provide, especially for pupils with special gifts and talents.
- The curriculum is adapted in response to pupils' interests, needs, abilities and requests, generating a high level of ownership for pupils.
- Opportunities to learn outside the classroom are capitalised upon. The pupils have frequent opportunities to draw on location in the community and further afield, for example, during residential and day visits to places of interest. This contributes to pupils' excellent attitudes towards the subject and their evident enjoyment of it.

Effectiveness of leadership and management of art, craft and design

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

- Leaders and managers are strongly focused on developing provision so that pupils of all abilities thrive in their learning and in their personal development. They provide strong direction and ambition and are skilful in communicating this to all staff.
- Senior leaders meet regularly to review the subject. They are focused strongly on the quality of provision, especially curriculum coverage. They are less rigorous in analysing the quality of outcomes because of the absence of an effective system for recording attainment and progress.
- Teaching is observed routinely. Judgements of its quality are accurate although focused on generic qualities of teaching rather than staff's subject knowledge and the impact that their teaching has on learning.
- The school has good capacity to improve further as seen in pupils' above average attainment over time and the school's success in developing pupils' creativity through first-hand, practical experiences.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- raising attainment from above average to high by:
 - devising an effective system for recording pupils' progress and attainment so that next steps are easily identifiable
 - developing pupils' use of sketchbooks
 - extending pupils' knowledge and understanding of the work of artists' designers and craftworkers from different cultures and continents.

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 published on the Ofsted website. It may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection. Except in the case of academies, a copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

Linda Killman
Her Majesty's Inspector