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Mr A Kenny  
Headteacher  
St Dunstan's Catholic Primary School  
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Dear Mr Kenny

### **Ofsted 2011–12 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 23 November 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: interviews with staff and pupils; discussions with the extended schools coordinator, parent support worker and the head of art and design at Bishop Challoner Catholic College; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; observation of eight lessons and visits to all classrooms.

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

#### **Achievement in art, craft and design**

Achievement in art, craft and design is good.

- Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage from broadly typical starting points. Almost all of the children reach national expectations and by the end of Reception; one in every five is working consistently beyond the level of the early learning goals. This is above the local authority and national averages.
- In all year groups, attainment at least matches national targets. Pupils with special gifts and talents excel through specialist intervention. Those whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities thrive as a result of good-quality targeted provision through the extended services project.

- Pupils' drawing develops confidently. They draw freely from different viewpoints using a suitable range of media including computer software. They do not, however, use sketchbooks routinely to reflect on past experiences and techniques they have explored.
- Pupils convey their ideas, views and perception about their own and others' work thoughtfully using subject-specific language confidently.
- Pupils enjoy the subject. They work safely, with sustained interest and enthusiasm, organising their workspaces efficiently.

### **Quality of teaching in art, craft and design**

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

- Staff support the subject enthusiastically. They use sufficient examples to inspire and to explain what is expected. Learning is set in contexts for pupils well so that they understand what they are trying to achieve.
- Planning ensures a good balance of teacher input and opportunities for pupils to work independently.
- Effective assessment summarises pupils' achievement against National Curriculum targets. Pupils receive helpful comments on their progress and how to improve which they respond to positively.
- Relationships between pupils and adults are very harmonious promoting trust and confidence and allowing pupils autonomy in making choices.

### **Quality of the curriculum in art, craft and design**

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

- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, a wide range of rich experiences, often linked to a theme, excites children. These experiences invite them to express their feelings and communicate their ideas through creative play. The range of activities for children to explore outside is not nearly as diverse as those in the classroom.
- The curriculum in Key Stages 1 and 2 is well organised ensuring that skills are taught systematically; pupils learn new skills at timely intervals and practise those they have learnt previously. Opportunities to work outside on a larger scale and to draw on location are limited.
- In Years 5 and 6, a stronger emphasis on making links between subjects is being trialled and is proving successful. The high quality of mixed-media work is indicative of pupils' enthusiasm for the themes they are studying, planned skilfully with their interests and wide-ranging abilities in mind.
- All pupils work alongside a resident living artist regularly providing them with insight into how artists think and create a finished piece over time.
- The extremely well-coordinated extended schools project provides rich and memorable art and design experiences. After-school and Saturday clubs, playschemes and projects afford activities often led by specialists that otherwise the school could not provide.

- Families in difficult circumstances benefit from participation in arts and crafts workshops. These develop parents' and carers' confidence in providing creative activities at home for their children to enjoy.
- Links with the secondary school and transition arrangements are exemplary. The head of art and design works with pupils regularly as do sixth-form art students.

### **Effectiveness of leadership and management in art, craft and design**

The effectiveness of leadership and management in art, craft and design is good.

- The senior leadership team provides clear direction and high expectations for improvement. Deadlines are set for the completion of monitoring and evaluation tasks. The subject leader's performance is evaluated annually.
- The school is ambitious for the inclusion and good achievement of all pupils as seen in its success in promoting equality of opportunity for different groups.
- Achievement is monitored but there is currently no mechanism for moderating pupils' work to achieve consistency in judging attainment.
- Resources are standard, rarely capitalising on the more unusual materials and media available in the natural and manufactured environments.

### **Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:**

- developing pupils' use of sketchbooks
- promoting creativity outdoors, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- developing systems to moderate assessments of pupils' work.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop art, craft and design in the school.

As 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. A copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

**Linda Killman**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**