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Mrs Z Mandeville
Acting Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Mandeville

Ofsted 2012–13 subject survey inspection programme: art, craft and design

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 8 May 2012 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, pupils, parents and carers, and the Chair of the Governing Body; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of two lessons.

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

Achievement in art, craft and design

Achievement in art, craft and design is good.

- Reception-aged children make good progress from broadly typical starting points on entry. By the end of the year, most children exceed the early goals for creative development. They draw, paint and make models in two and three dimensions using different media and materials. Children show great pleasure in being original. As one five-year-old explained, 'I am a bit of an artist. I made my picture my own way and used whatever I liked. The swirls are the stars.' They cooperate well with each other in pairs and groups self-selecting their materials.
- Pupils in Key Stage 1 continue to make good progress. Their drawing, painting, printing and modelling are above expected levels by the end of Year 2. Their finished pieces show adventurous and unique ways of responding to a similar starting point. This good progress continues

through Key Stage 2 and outcomes by the end of Year 6 are securely at or above the level expected. Pupils use computer software confidently to explore colour and design. They find digital images, such as people in action on the internet, independently as a starting point for their own work.

- Regular experiences in drawing from memory, imagination and observation help pupils' drawing to progress well and contribute to their enjoyment of the subject. The quality of drawing by the most able pupils in Key Stage 2 shows maturity and accomplishment in creating tonal effects.
- Pupils develop a secure understanding of the work of artists, designers and craftworkers. They study the techniques and incorporate them into their own work. A Key Stage 1 pupil commented: 'First we made paintings exactly like Van Gogh's then as the topic progressed we began to use his techniques in our own work.'
- A strong spiritual dimension is evident when pupils talk about their work. They explain their emotions and feelings eloquently. They show a high level of sensitivity in evaluating each other's work. Pupils reflect on their own work thoughtfully and are able to pinpoint how they would improve it next time.

Quality of teaching in art, craft and design

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

- Pupils respond positively to teaching that is well organised and planned with prior learning in mind. Teachers are sensible in seeking advice and support from specialists to aid them in developing their subject knowledge. Not all are completely secure in recognising progression so that, for example, the most able and those with special gifts and talents push the boundaries of materials, ideas and processes.
- Pupils' responses to a subject questionnaire revealed unanimous agreement that their teachers are enthusiastic. Teaching is confident and, particularly when specialists work with pupils, it encourages diversity and creativity.
- Assessment is regular and accurate. However, assessment information is not always used effectively to devise activities with a higher level of challenge for the most able pupils. For example, setting more complex poses in figure drawing to promote learning about foreshortening.
- Relationships are extremely good in all classes and staff know the pupils well. This enables pupils to approach their teachers confidently about their work and seek advice when needed.

Quality of the curriculum in art, craft and design

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

- In Reception and Key Stage 1, pupils choose from a wide range of activities to promote their creative development. Inside the classroom

resources are organised so that they are freely available for pupils to choose from without constraint to encourage creativity. Even so, the provision outside is less well developed to extend their good learning in a contrasting environment.

- The curriculum is broad and balanced offering a wide spectrum of experiences. A two-year cycle ensures that the National Curriculum is covered within fresh topics for pupils in mixed-age classes. Pupils' views are sought and curriculum planning accommodates their interests giving their learning relevance.
- Pupils benefit from participation in a very wide range of local art, craft and design activities and projects such as the Stroud schools display or the local carnival. These provide them with wider experiences that the school would not otherwise be in a position to offer.
- Parents and carers, local artists, specialist teachers within and beyond the school and local resources are all used to enrich the curriculum. For example, pupils drew on location and found inspiration for work in the style of Georgia O'Keeffe in a parents' and carers' garden.
- The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual development extremely well. For example, Martin Luther King's speech, *I had a dream*, prompted unique responses from pupils in drawings, paintings and photographic montages.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in art, craft and design

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

- Leaders and managers of the subject are inspiring and resourceful. As acting headteacher, you have carefully considered the handover of subject leadership from the outgoing subject specialist teacher through thoughtful succession planning. This provides a secure basis for the next leader to build on prior effective leadership.
- Data are analysed effectively to evaluate standards, provide evidence of pupils' progress and to identify pupils with special gifts and talents. Even so, as the school acknowledges, not all teachers are confident about taking pupils beyond their comfort zone.
- Quality assurance through work scrutiny, evaluation of curriculum planning and seeking the views of stakeholders is secure. This provides secure evidence for setting future priorities. However, opportunities for the subject leader to observe teaching at first hand and thus provide developmental feedback are limited.
- The school is innovative and resourceful in capitalising on the skills and expertise of others to enhance the subject. A fine example is how the school uses the expertise of a local provider to broker the employment of quality artists. An extremely talented local artist ran the art club for a time enabling pupils to produce high-quality mixed-media work ensuring that excellent value for money was achieved.
- Members of the governing body keep abreast of developments in the subject through the Curriculum and Resources Committee. This enables

them to make informed decisions on spending to ensure that pupils have access to good-quality resources.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- further developing the quality of teaching and the challenge of learning opportunities by:
 - ensuring that children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have regular access to good-quality experiences outdoors that promote their creativity
 - improving teachers' understanding of progression across a range of processes so that the level of challenge for the most able pupils is heightened
 - allocating time for the subject leader to observe teaching and learning at first hand.

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