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Dear Miss Grace

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 17 May 2012 with Liz Macfarlane, Additional Inspector, 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; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of four 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.

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress in creative development. They show confidence and pleasure in drawing using a very wide range of media and tools on different scales. Their well-developed independence is evident in the way that they select materials and justify their choices.
- In Key Stages 1 and 2 pupils continue to make good progress in most processes and especially in drawing and three-dimensional work. Portrait work in Years 5 and 6 shows increasing skill of depicting proportion, scale and tonal variation; models, clay work and sculptures demonstrate above average standards of construction and skill. Pupils' use of computer software to manipulate images, explore colour and design and to draw is of good quality.

- Pupils are thoughtful and reflective learners who work with concentration in lessons. They communicate their thoughts, feelings and emotions convincingly and evaluate each other's work sensitively. Their appreciation of other artists' work is limited mainly to Western European male painters.

Quality of teaching in art, craft and design

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

- Teaching is confident with very thoughtful use of resources for pupils to handle, and effective use of displays, demonstration and questioning to capture pupils' imagination and inspire them.
- Lessons are structured and well-organised so that pupils are able to make good progress. However, with the exception of the Early Years Foundation Stage where planning supports children's curiosity and promotes exploration well, it sometimes lacks flexibility. Planning that is too heavily focused on learning objectives limits opportunities for diverse responses to a similar starting point.
- Good relationships and high expectations encourage pupils to ask questions and seek advice which they respond to positively.
- Teachers' subject skills are stronger in drawing, collage, three-dimensional and digital media than, for example, in painting, textiles and printmaking where pupils' attainment is weaker and outcomes are more predictable.

Quality of the curriculum in art, craft and design

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

- The Early Years Foundation Stage offers good provision for young children to develop their creativity through purposeful, imaginative play. Opportunities inside are more exciting and varied than outdoors.
- Provision for the National Curriculum meets requirements but, as the school recognises, more work is needed to enrich the curriculum and extend opportunities for pupils to investigate art, craft and design through visits to museums, galleries or by working directly with living artists.
- Opportunities are plentiful for pupils to explore art, craft and design through other subjects such as English, history and religious education.
- Provision meets pupils' individual interests and needs well. For example, a Year 6 pupil leads a lunchtime art club and another explained how an art therapy programme had helped him with his communication skills.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted strongly through the subject. Collaboration and sharing of ideas is encouraged. Exhibitions of work in the local church are regular.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in art, craft and design

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

- Subject leadership is dynamic, energetic and passionate with a well-developed understanding of the characteristics of creativity.
- Quality assurance practice is good although feedback following observations of teaching is not always balanced with recognition of strengths and areas for development which require further training.
- The introduction of a detailed system for gathering and analysing data and rigorous assessment arrangements enables the subject leader to make accurate evaluation of pupils' achievement.
- Displays are eye-catching and ensure that the subject has a high profile within the school.
- The school shares good practice with other local schools but links with practising artists, craftworkers and designers outside school are underdeveloped.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- broadening and deepening pupils' experiences through enriched curriculum provision including:
 - studying a wider range of artists, designers and craftworkers
 - increasing visits to museums and art galleries
 - making better use of the outdoor spaces
 - providing opportunities to explore textiles and printmaking
- extending teachers' subject expertise across a wider range of processes by providing developmental feedback and training so that they are able to plan for and encourage individual responses confidently.

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