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Mr N Booth  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Booth

Ofsted 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 May 2007 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 contributing institutions, but individual institutions will not be identified in the main text. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included: interviews with staff, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work, observation of three lessons and the creative arts afternoon.

The overall effectiveness of the subject was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are good.

- In the Foundation Stage, pupils' skills in creative development on entry are generally below age-related expectations. In the Nursery, for example, the pupils have very limited prior experience of using tools and media. By the end of the Reception year pupils have made good progress with most reaching national expectations.
- By the end of Year 2, as a result of effective, systematic teaching of skills and a broad range of art and design experiences in many subject

areas, many pupils reach above average standards particularly in painting and mixed-media work.

- Sketchbooks are used frequently for pupils to explore and record their ideas. The work in sketchbooks show that pupils make good progress developing their skills in drawing well.
- The pupils' behaviour is good. They work with perseverance and have good attitudes towards the subject.
- Given their progress over time and the impact that the subject has on developing their good personal and social skills, the pupils' achievement is good.

### Quality of teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good.

- In the Foundation Stage a good range of activities are provided to promote creative development. The balance between adult led and pupil inspired play is good and the pupils have continuous access to indoor and outdoor play.
- Teachers' planning is thorough. It builds on prior learning but opportunities are missed to balance opportunities for creativity with objective-led planning.
- The learning environment is visually exciting with art work of all kinds displayed to a good standard. Resources are well organised and accessible to pupils.
- Teachers show good subject knowledge in their teaching. They demonstrate and use pupils' work skilfully to focus pupils' attention on pitfalls and barriers to success as well as good quality work. However, experimental work is too cautious and over controlled by teachers. Thus opportunities for pupils to learn by their mistakes are restricted.
- Pupils with additional needs are very well supported by able teaching assistants who know exactly when to intervene and when to allow pupils to work independently.
- The pupils are introduced to the work of artists, designers and craftspeople but their understanding or memory of their work is shallow.

### Quality of the curriculum

The curriculum is good.

- The curriculum builds firmly on pupils' prior experience and attainment.
- Links with other subjects are excellent. Pupils use and practise their art and design skills extensively in other subjects.
- A broad range of experiences enables pupils to systematically acquire appropriate knowledge, skills and understanding in the subject. Opportunities for pupils to work on a large scale, in 3D and to explore crafts are too limited.

- Opportunities for pupils to work with artists, designers and craftspeople are frequent. Artists work with pupils on collaborative projects to create permanent works of art to enhance the surroundings and promote community interest in the subject. Arts afternoons enhance the curriculum providing opportunities for pupils to work with adults and pupils beyond their regular year group.
- The school is successful, achieving recognition for pupils' work entered in art and design competitions.
- Art challenges are a regular feature of homework. Family members are actively encouraged to support their children in model making and design projects. This has a positive impact on pupils' self-esteem, their enjoyment of the subject and community involvement.
- The needs and abilities of all pupils are well met. Plans are securely in place to increase the challenge for the most able pupils in the subject. This is a priority in the school improvement plan.

### Leadership and management

Leadership and management are good.

- The school's commitment to the subject is illustrated by its achievement in acquiring Artsmark Gold.
- The new subject leader is enthusiastic, well-organised and is driving the subject forward with energy. Plans for the future development of art, craft and design are challenging and exciting. Monitoring and evaluation of the subject is satisfactory.
- Subject documentation is up to date and accessible. Aims outlined in the school policy for art, craft and design are a true reflection of the school's practice.
- Standards in the Foundation Stage are rigorously analysed and the school is acutely aware of the progress that pupils make at this stage. This is not replicated as effectively in Key Stage 1.
- Resources are well managed by staff and treated respectfully by pupils.

### Subject issue

- All aspects of the art, craft and design curriculum are covered and new learning securely builds on what pupils know and can do.
- Pupils' art folders, topic books and sketchbooks provide a record of achievement that is used to assess their stage of development and standards reached.
- Work is underway to produce a portfolio of exemplar work.

### Inclusion

- The curriculum is inclusive.
- Boys and girls enjoy the subject and achieve well.

- Art from different cultures, countries and times is studied adding to pupils' cultural development and deepening their understanding.
- Pupils with behavioural difficulties benefit from working in very small groups with an adult using art and design activities to generate conversation about their feelings and emotions.
- Through its strategic improvement plan, the school has a range of initiatives underway to improve the challenge for the most able pupils.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- develop creativity in pupils' art and design work by allowing pupils to explore with less adult intervention and balancing opportunities to develop creativity with objective-led planning
- broaden the curriculum to include large scale, craft activities and 3D work.

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

As I explained in my previous letter, a copy of this letter will be sent to your Local Authority and will be published on the Ofsted website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Linda Killman  
Her Majesty's Inspector