

Alexandra House, T 08456 404040
33 Kingsway, F 020 7421 6855
LONDON WC2B 6SE www.ofsted.gov.uk



9 December 2007

Miss C Duffy
Headteacher
St Augustine's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School
Colegate
Leam Lane
Gateshead
Tyne and Wear
NE10 8PP

Dear Miss Duffy

Ofsted Subjects & Survey Inspection Programme –art and design

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff during my visit on 6 December 2007 to look at work in art and design.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key aspects of the subject the visit had a particular focus on the quality of assessment in the subject and its impact on pupils' progress and creativity. The visit provided valuable information that 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 are published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term.

The evidence used to inform the judgement made included: interviews with staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of 12 lessons or part lessons.

The overall effectiveness of art and design was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are good.

- Children start school with creative skills that are below those typical for their age. They make good progress exploring and manipulating a broad range of different two and three-dimensional materials. Children respond equally well whether guided by adults or working independently to well chosen starting points and themes such as 'dinosaurs'.

- In Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 a very good programme of structured lessons extend pupils' skills and lead to consistently good progress, so that they reach good and sometimes very high standards by the end of each stage.
- Across the school pupils are eager to explore two and three dimensional materials to express their ideas and responses to themes such as 'movement' in Key Stage 1, 'natural forms' or 'Pop art' in Key Stage 2. Pupils confidently use two and three dimensional materials of different sizes and scales to develop skills and understanding of ideas and concepts. They work very well from first-hand experience and imagination to become very confident in understanding the process to design, make, improve and evaluate their work.
- Pupils concentrate extremely well and are keen to talk about their work, for instance to gain their peers' view about a particular colour or effect in their portrait painting or printmaking at Key Stage 2. They are equally enthusiastic when they have opportunity to design and make three dimensional models, for example, at Key Stage 1 wire and plaster sculptures of themselves in various 'action' poses.
- Throughout the school, pupils take great pride in their work and are keen to improve it. They are becoming expert at developing ideas from drawings and digital images into large scale collage, painting, drawing or digitally manipulated images. Many of these are highly creative and their sophisticated images are finished to a high standard.
- Pupils show a growing understanding of contemporary art and can explain its relationship to their own work, for instance when creating images in paint and digital media inspired by Pop artists. All pupils make good use of first-hand experience and observation to make preparatory 'studies' for their work, enhanced at Key Stage 2 by the use of sketch books.
- Pupils' love of learning in art gives them a springboard for creative work in other subjects and makes a significant contribution to their personal development. They are enthusiastic to share their knowledge, by using technical terms and referring to artists' work they have studied to explain how they created and improved it, and what skills they learned.

Quality of teaching and learning in art and design

Teaching and learning in art and design are good and sometimes outstanding.

- Teachers in each Key Stage are new this term to a thematic approach to teaching art. Regular lessons are timetabled simultaneously across each year group. This is proving highly successful in raising standards, giving pupils a consistent experience and developing their skills and understanding.
- Teachers comment that they are growing in confidence as they discover how successful this approach is with their pupils, and they are aware of their need for training as they teach new themes. They are highly enthusiastic using their established good relationships, classroom

management and teaching strategies to challenge and stretch pupils to very good effect.

- Systematic and detailed lesson plans make sure pupils and teachers are clear about each stage of learning and that pupils acquire and build their skills. The outcomes are celebrated in the opportunity teachers make for peer and self-evaluation in lessons and by excellent displays that show the progression of work in each theme.

Quality of the curriculum

The curriculum in art and design is good.

- The school has recently finished a major evaluation and restructuring of its curriculum. One highly successful outcome is an emphasis on the arts and the introduction this term of blocked time for regular class art teaching. This has had a major and very positive impact on provision and standards in art.
- An external consultant worked closely with the school to create the art scheme of work. Well chosen themes are planned to meet pupils' interests and requirements of the National Curriculum. They give pupils experience of a good, broad range of two and three dimensional media with ample opportunity to work from first-hand experience and imagination.
- The first themes this term have proved highly successful to raise standards, give the subject high profile and make sure pupils have regular, structured art lessons. This enables them to develop skills, ideas and concepts and relate their artwork to their lives and to the work of artists. Currently though pupils have little opportunity to work with living artists or see their work in galleries, but this is planned for development very shortly.

Leadership and management of art and design

Leadership and management of the subject are outstanding.

- In the past year you have restructured the leadership team to create year group team leaders. This has driven forward development in art by enabling team leaders to work autonomously with teachers to implement the new scheme of work.
- Across the school the year teams are highly motivated and consistent in their teaching approach of the new art themes. The team leaders work with teachers and teaching assistants to plan and evaluate the success of lessons and suggest improvement. This is underpinned by high quality displays of each theme that show the clear impact of the vision and planning on pupils' learning. The volume of work and the success of this first term has given teachers and pupils alike great confidence and an outstanding commitment to continue the implementation. Art has a high profile across the school.

Subject issue: the quality of assessment and its impact on pupils' progress and creativity is judged to be satisfactory.

- The assessment of pupils' work is in its infancy. A simple system to track the standard and progress of each pupil is in place. Teachers are starting to use national reference materials to level pupils' work at the end of each year. In lessons they give pupils consistent and helpful feedback about their work and regular opportunity for peer and self-evaluation. This makes sure that pupils are clear about what they have to do to improve their work and what they have done well.
- Planned assessment at the end of the current themes looks a positive development to inform teaching for next term. The intention is to use the outcomes, together with the evidence from a recent whole-school drawing exercise, to look closely at progression of art skills across the school.
- The development of assessment has given teachers an idea of pupils' standards and achievement. They are able to identify where pupils' work needs to be improved and where they have particular strengths. This has helped teachers to develop pupils' skills and creativity very well in their current work. However, the system is too new for its effect to be seen on pupils' progress and creativity beyond the scope of the current term.

Inclusion

Inclusion is good.

The curriculum plan and whole class teaching makes sure that all pupils including those with learning difficulties and disabilities take a full part in lessons and achieve success. Teachers work closely with well-deployed teaching assistants to give pupils extra help where required. Work seen during the survey was designed to stretch all pupils regardless of ability and age. However, the school is evaluating lesson content, and with the new assessment system identifying higher achieving pupils who might benefit from enriched provision.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- develop opportunities for pupils to make connections between their own work and that by living artists and craft workers
- develop assessment practice so that it provides robust information about what pupils know and do, to inform teachers' lesson plans and teaching
- evaluate the outcomes of themed lessons to identify and inform future provision of staff training programmes.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop art 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

Michael Haynes
Additional Inspector