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05 June 2009

Mr G R Jenkinson  
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Dear Mr Jenkinson

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Art and design

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 3 and 4 June 2009 to look at work in art and design.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the subject, the visit had a particular focus on the impact of the new secondary subject curriculum that challenges you to develop students who 'think and act like artists, craftworkers and designers, working creatively and intelligently'.

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. 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 and students, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of students' work from all year groups and observations of four lessons.

Art and design

The overall effectiveness was judged to be satisfactory.

Achievement and standards in art and design

Achievement and standards are satisfactory overall.

- Students make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 3 achieving average standards overall. However, some work is of good quality.
- In working from observation, students appreciate composition, tone, colour and pattern making in a range of two dimensional and three dimensional media. Recent work introduced for some of the Year 7 and 8 groups is particularly expressive. Their drawings are bold and experimentation uninhibited, for example, exploring printmaking

techniques, mixed three dimensional media and scale. In Year 9, students have developed good skills in the use of colour and in batik. However, the more routine projects do not provide enough challenge or opportunity for students to make individually creative responses.

- In Year 10, students follow more personal interpretations and some have found the change of approach difficult at first. Their sketchbooks, drawing and mixed media paintings show good potential for further development. In Year 11, students progress to achieve some lively and well presented work including three dimensional construction.
- GCSE examination results are satisfactory overall. The proportion of students who achieve A\*- A grades is high and well above the national average, however results have fluctuated at grades A-C and show some underperformance in relation to the national averages from year to year.
- Students are well motivated and apply themselves in lessons attentively. They participate in a range of lunchtime workshops which extend their enjoyment of the subject.

### Quality of teaching and learning in art and design

Teaching and learning in art and design are satisfactory with good features.

- In the most effective lessons, practical activities are well chosen and planned. The impact on learning is evident in students' engagement and industriousness. In one Year 9 lesson observed students were stimulated to produce large scale work using mono-printmaking. In a Year 8 mask making lesson good progress was underpinned by pace and participation. Students were encouraged to take part in demonstrations explaining to others how they achieved certain effects.
- In less effective lessons, the aims and objectives were not reinforced sufficiently through effective questioning during the lesson and at the plenary to evaluate progress and probe students' understanding.
- Students generally receive helpful feedback from their teachers during lessons, on how to think about and improve their work. Students are involved in self and peer evaluation. However, the frequency of assessment, setting of targets and quality of written feedback are inconsistent between different year groups.

### Quality of the curriculum in art and design

The curriculum in art and design is satisfactory.

- Recent changes to projects have led to lively work by Year 7 and Year 8. For example, in studying the war time work of Henry Moore, Year 7 students produced expressive and vibrant studies using wax resist. The most effective planning links students' learning about relevant artists to opportunities to apply their understanding and skills.
- Students in all years have a good awareness of artists' work. However sources and images selected are often similar or restricted to the major 20th century movements.
- Evidence of students' responses to the previous scheme of work indicates insufficient opportunities for individual expression. While

students do develop their confidence and refine their skills there are not enough opportunities to gather research from first hand sources, initiate ideas themselves or develop individual solutions.

- Enrichment opportunities contribute positively to the curriculum. Throughout the school the creative work of students is well represented. Cross-curricular projects include the school's recent drama production. Other initiatives have involved local businesses and creative practitioners.
- There are good opportunities for art and design students to take vocational courses and the recently introduced specialist creative and media diploma is established through a network of local schools.

## Leadership and management of art and design

The leadership and management of art and design are satisfactory.

- The subject has been led by the school's Advanced Skills Teacher (AST) during this year, following the previous subject lead taking a new appointment in December. The recently appointed art and design subject leader is a specialist and, although he does not take up his post until September, has already begun to review the curriculum, and the teaching and learning approaches used. He has prioritised the areas for development accurately, with the support of the new area manager. Areas of inconsistency, for example in assessment practice, are being addressed.
- Cohesion between subject self-evaluation and improvement planning is at an early stage of development. The action plan does not prioritise the main areas for improvement in relation to students' achievement sufficiently clearly. Nevertheless, approaches and analysis developed by senior managers at whole school level provide a secure basis. The need to improve standards in art has rightly been identified in the School Development Plan and the subject leader's Performance Management objectives.
- Available resources are organised and managed carefully. The accommodation consisting of two studios is good, with helpful technical assistance deployed appropriately.

Subject issue: the impact of the new secondary curriculum on students ability to 'think and act like artists working creatively and intelligently'

This is satisfactory with good aspects.

- The new curriculum scheme of work for some Year 7 and Year 8 groups offers a good range of creative experience resulting in some lively work using large scale constructions and a range of processes.
- Students' enjoyment of the subject in Year 10, and quality of their work indicates that the application of their skills, for example into decorative and mixed media developments, is starting to diversify.
- External visits to London and regular use of artists in residence have provided good opportunities for students to gain awareness of creative practitioners and industries. For example, some work was inspired by

visiting artist John Creighton. A North Yorkshire Business Enterprise Project also enabled year 8 students to present their work outside school at the Castle Howard Food Festival.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- promote students' individuality and creativity through the subject by reviewing curriculum projects, increasing the use of first hand imagery and broadening the range of contemporary art, craft and design sources used
- ensure that assessment practice, written feedback and monitoring of progress is consistent across groups
- strengthen subject self-evaluation processes and improvement planning in art and design, by developing a clearer focus on students' outcomes.

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

Sandra Tweedie  
Additional Inspector