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Dear Mr Collins

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 28 September 2009 to look at work in art, craft 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 how effectively pupils learn to draw with confidence and creativity.

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 included interviews, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of lessons.

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

Achievement in art, craft and design

Achievement in art, craft and design is satisfactory.

- The children make good progress in their creative development during the Reception Year and the majority reach the level expected. They make good use of processes such as painting to respond to the world around them and their work shows inventiveness and individuality.
- Between Years 1 and 6, the pupils enjoy the subject but do not progress as well as in their first year. They make satisfactory progress and their attainment is average by the end of Year 6. Boys and girls make equal

progress and the achievement of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is satisfactory.

- Behaviour during lessons is good. Pupils use materials and equipment responsibly and show good social skills through the way they work together and support each other.
- Pupils make satisfactory progress in acquiring visual research techniques, for example, observational drawing or making collections of images in their sketchbooks. Their skills in refining their ideas from such starting points are less well developed so that project outcomes are not highly individual or diverse.
- Progress is satisfactory in learning about the properties of materials and processes, for example in painting or sculpture. Pupils make the best progress when combining materials, as evident in mixed media collages of figures made in connection with work in history.
- Pupils develop a satisfactory understanding of aspects of visual language such as line or colour. These are used effectively to depict what is seen, but pupils are less adept at using them to communicate the unseen such as mood or emotion or more complex ideas like movement.
- They enjoy learning about the work of other artists. Some examples, such as Year 6 paintings influenced by Monet, show the artist's approach making a good impact on the pupils' work. However, this is not always the case and the key features of artists' work are not always exploited fully by pupils to develop their own ideas.

Quality of teaching of art, craft and design

The quality of teaching of art, craft and design is satisfactory.

- The teachers and other adults are enthusiastic about teaching the subject and communicate their enthusiasm well to pupils. Relationships with pupils are good and behaviour is managed well so that classrooms offer a positive atmosphere for learning.
- Lessons are structured well and teachers are confident in managing different aspects of learning such as discussion or the use of practical materials.
- Displays, including interactive whiteboards, are used well to support learning by showing visual reference or celebrating the work achieved so far. Classrooms are adapted well to link to a thematic approach to learning by immersing the pupils in their current areas of study.
- Activities in lessons and over time take place in logical sequences. In the Reception class, progress is good because activities are more precisely tailored to meet children's individual needs. Activities for older pupils are not always planned with sufficient reference to pupils' differing attainment or designed to encourage the development of highly individual outcomes.
- Feedback from teachers is regular, both verbally and through marking in sketchbooks. Much is of value and the time taken reflects teachers'

commitment to the subject. However, the pupils are not always challenged to reflect on their own work or decide how to develop it independently.

Quality of the curriculum in art, craft and design

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

- The curriculum has developed well in recent years and is based on themes linking subject areas. The pupils say they like learning this way because it 'makes more sense'. The themes chosen appeal to pupils' interests and help sustain their learning. These developments have, in part, come about through work with local schools in the 'Cr8 Cluster'.
- Subject learning objectives are linked well within and between projects to ensure that skills build logically over time. There is good coverage of different genres such as landscape and portraiture, of work on different scales and experiences in art, craft and design. The use of computers has grown in recent years and pupils have good opportunities to use them to make images and movies.
- Curriculum experiences are enriched well by a good range of visits and visitors. These offer powerful stimulus to learning and often make a lasting impact on the pupils. The school has identified that relatively few of the people that pupils encounter are creative practitioners and is taking good steps to redress the balance in future.
- Good reference is made to the local environment so that the work produced reflects the place and time in which the pupils live. For example, Year 2 pupils are really looking forward to following the journey of William the Conqueror from his landing place in Pevensey Bay to the site of the battle of Hastings.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in art, craft and design

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

- Subject leadership is well informed and motivated. Work in recent years to improve the subject curriculum, alongside a school-wide move toward thematic learning, indicates good capacity for further development.
- Staff work collaboratively to plan curriculum content and to develop their confidence in teaching it. Appropriate training is organised where required.
- Monitoring and evaluation are satisfactory with areas of strength. Pupils' work and teachers' planning are scrutinised regularly. However, there is too little use of assessment information to monitor pupils' progress, including that in relation to different areas of learning.
- Subject development priorities are largely appropriate; for example, identifying that teaching needs to make more use of assessment information about each pupil's progress when planning lessons. Nevertheless, the aims in subject development planning are not linked closely enough to measurable outcomes for pupils.

- Work in partnership with organisations such as the schools in the Cr8 cluster and local museums and places of interest, enriches the curriculum.

Subject issue: how effectively do pupils learn to draw confidently and creatively?

Pupils' learning about how to draw confidently and creatively is satisfactory.

- Pupils make satisfactory progress in observational drawing. In the Reception Year, they develop confidence in mark making in response to what they see and feel. In Years 1 to 6, they make satisfactory progress in developing their skills but do not always extend what they already know.
- Younger pupils draw well from memory and imagination when depicting stories and events. Older pupils are less confident to work without direct visual reference, finding it difficult to express internal thoughts or to develop personal ideas fully.
- Progress is satisfactory in learning to draw with different materials because these experiences are planned sequentially into the curriculum. There are some good opportunities for collaborative work which pupils enjoy and contribute to the development of their social skills.
- The teaching of drawing is satisfactory but shares similar weaknesses with teaching as a whole. There is insufficient matching of the support provided to pupils' differing abilities to ensure each makes the best possible progress and develops work which is more individually creative.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- improving the progress of pupils in Years 1 to 6 by:
 - providing activities in lessons which are more closely matched to pupils' individual needs and targets
 - involving pupils more thoroughly in assessing their own work and deciding how to improve it.
- improving subject monitoring and evaluation by:
 - checking the pupils' progress more carefully in different areas of learning, including through more reference to assessment information
 - ensuring that the goals for subject development are linked to measurable outcomes for pupils so that the impact can be checked.

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 Ofsted's website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Long
Her Majesty's Inspector