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Ms K Merriman  
Headteacher  
Gastrells Community Primary School  
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Dear Ms Merriman

Ofsted 2009-10 subject 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 2 March 2010 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.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included: interviews with staff and pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; observation of three lessons; and a meeting with the subject governor for art, craft and design.

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

Achievement in art, craft and design

Pupils' achievement in art, craft and design is good.

- From broadly average starting points in the Reception class, pupils make good progress in Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress in lessons with skilful guidance from learning support assistants.

- Good provision leads to high standards in ceramics; the quality of finish and decoration is excellent. Standards are above average in textile work and design using computer software.
- Timely interventions throughout lessons provide pupils' with good guidance and secure their good attainment and progress.
- Pupils work diligently with attention to detail. They thoroughly enjoy the subject with ample opportunity to share ideas. Expectations for them to organise their own work spaces and to take calculated risks are not high enough.
- The subject enhances pupils' understanding of cultural diversity by exchanging art work with a French school and studying a wide range of past and present artists, designers and craftworkers.

#### Quality of teaching of art, craft and design

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

- Most teaching is effective in ensuring that pupils are motivated, inspired and engaged in their learning.
- Lessons are structured with varied, interesting and innovative approaches used to retain a fresh edge to learning throughout. Appropriate use of new technology maximises learning.
- Teachers use their strong subject knowledge effectively in teaching technical skills.
- Regular assessment informs planning and reporting to parents and carers.
- Pupils know where their work is leading. This generates productivity and allows time for ideas to develop.

#### Quality of the curriculum in art, craft and design

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- The curriculum provides most pupils with rich, enjoyable and memorable learning experiences often enhanced with specialist input from local artists, educational visits, and participation in local arts events and clubs.
- A lack of choice and opportunity to initiate imaginative play limit children's involvement in the creative process in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Frequent opportunities for pupils to use their art skills in other subjects develop their competency and confidence.
- Pupils' involvement in purposeful, imaginative activity often leads to work that enhances the learning environment and provides pleasure for others.

#### Effectiveness of leadership and management of art, craft and design

The leadership and management of art, craft and design are good.

- The subject benefits from ambitious, inspiring leadership that promotes creativity and seeks opportunity for pupils to use their skills in a wide range of contexts.
- Good systems for monitoring and evaluation accurately identify areas for staff and pupil development. Opportunities to observe the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum in action are too limited.
- Well-developed links with professional partnerships are used innovatively to promote pupils' achievement. Pupils' work is exhibited widely.

Subject issue: how effectively pupils learn to draw with confidence and creativity

Pupils' learning about how to draw with confidence and creativity is satisfactory.

- Attainment in drawing is at age-related expectations. Pupils draw satisfactorily from observation, memory and imagination.
- New skills are not taught systematically because teachers lack understanding of progression in drawing. Sketchbooks are underdeveloped as a means of refining pupils' drawing skills.

Examples of good practice

- The provision for ceramics, textiles and information and communication technology.
- The effective use of the unique skills of artists to develop pupils' creativity.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- improving provision for creative development in the Early Years Foundation Stage both indoors and outside by:
  - providing a stimulating environment in which creativity and originality can flourish through child-initiated play
- accelerating pupils' progress in drawing by developing:
  - the use of sketchbooks
  - teachers' understanding of progression
- raising expectations for pupils to organise themselves and use their initiative.

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

As I explained previously, 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