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Mrs L Jackson
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Jackson

Ofsted 2011–12 subject survey inspection programme: art, craft and design

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 6 March 2012 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 the contributing institutions but individual institutions will not be identified in the main text without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included: interviews with staff and pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; and joint observation of four lessons with a deputy headteacher.

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

Achievement in art, craft and design

Achievement in art, craft and design is good.

- Children enter Nursery with well-below average creative skills. They make good progress and develop their creativity successfully because of well-planned, exciting opportunities that enable them to gain skills and confidence in a vast range of materials. Children were seen expertly manipulating paper-clay to make their Olympic medals.
- Pupils' achievements by Year 6 are at least in line with expectations representing good progress from their starting points in Nursery. Boys and girls achieve equally well because topics are designed to inspire them.

- Children become adept at mark-making from a very early age because of the activities children access in the children's centre that develop their fine motor skills and stretch their imaginations. In school, pupils' drawing skills are improving well because of the subject leaders' recent focus on teaching skills in a more planned and progressive way.
- Pupils show good understanding of the work of different artists and designers, particularly because their topic 'Great British Artists' and homework project 'Great Artists' has inspired them to research and consider a vast range of artists and styles. They talk knowledgeably, for example, about the work of Turner, Morris, Kandinsky, Emin or Paolozzi and their influence on their own work.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are exemplary. They are eager to experiment, work well together and are cooperative and supportive of one another, eagerly sharing resources and ideas when activities require.

Quality of teaching in art, craft and design

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

- Teachers are enthusiastic and have good subject knowledge because they regularly take part in professional development activities to improve their own skills and confidence.
- Techniques and skills are skilfully taught and teachers successfully encourage pupils to choose materials to develop ideas in both two and three dimensions from shared starting points.
- Pupils' are accomplished in reviewing each other's work. Their views, and teachers' ongoing feedback in lessons, helps pupils know how well they are doing and how to improve or develop their work. However, teachers' good use of assessment to plan activities that are carefully matched to pupils' starting points is not fully embedded in all classes.
- All teachers have introduced creative journals effectively to pupils. These are valued by pupils as it helps them develop their ideas and practice their skills overtime.

Quality of the curriculum in art, craft and design

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

- The subject is embedded across a range of interesting topics. 'Trip weeks' that include visits out of school, and workshops in school, enrich the curriculum successfully and pupils enjoy these experiences greatly.
- Older pupils enthusiastically recall their recent visit to the National Gallery and likewise, younger ones their visit to a pottery workshop. They also talk about how their work with a visiting artist and architect helps to develop their ideas and understanding but say they would like even more opportunities to work with contemporary artists and craftmakers.

- Pupils' knowledge and experience of design and sculpture have been enriched by the school's partnership working with the Olympic Development agency; the school is within a mile of the Olympic site. For example the 'Building Exploratory' where pupils were able to explore the buildings, materials and designs of the Olympic park first-hand.
- Pupils showed how posters for the venue from artists such as Rachel Whiteread, Bridget Riley and Howard Hodgkin, inspired their own work on display across the school, and their enthusiasm for the event as a whole. Indeed the work of children in Reception in the style of Bridget Riley is showcased on a national Op-Art website for all to see.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in art, craft and design

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

- The senior leadership team has joint responsibility for the subject and is passionate about it and its continuing improvement. Pupils' progress has hastened over the past three years as a result actions taken to make the subject the lead focus within a creative curriculum.
- Leaders spread their enthusiasm and subject knowledge successfully; supporting where necessary through coaching, and providing extensive professional development opportunities from experts in the subject.
- Leaders have an accurate view of what is working well and what could be better through regular monitoring of teaching and pupils' work, teachers' and pupils' creative journals, displays and planning. They have been aware that more opportunities to develop pupils' digital media skills need to be developed and actions are taking place to tackle this.
- The senior team keeps up to date with current initiatives in the subject effectively, through network meetings with other specialists in local schools, professional development opportunities and visits to galleries and exhibitions across the city.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- providing more opportunities for pupils to work with contemporary artists and craftmakers
- embedding throughout the school the good assessment practice that exists whereby teachers use assessment in the subject to plan activities closely matched to pupils' starting points.

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

As explained previously, a copy of this letter will be published on the Ofsted website. It may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection. A copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Farrow
Her Majesty's Inspector