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Miss E Reay
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Dear Miss Reay

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Art, craft & design

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 07 December 2006 to look at work in art, craft & design.

The visit provided valuable information which 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 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, discussions with a group of children from Year 1 to Year 4, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of children's work and observation of four lessons.

Art, craft and design

The overall effectiveness of the subject was judged to be outstanding.

Achievement and standards

- In the Foundation Stage the children make good progress in their creative development and go on to achieve very high standards in art, craft and design in Key Stage 1 and 2. Children with different abilities in their other subjects develop very good skills in drawing and painting in all years, especially in studies from direct observation. Wall hangings, mosaic panels and weavings on display and photographs of annual arts events show that children are able to collaborate well on larger scale projects to achieve lively, expressive work. Children have a very good knowledge of the work and context of individual artists which they have studied and in Years 3 and 4 can express and justify their own opinions about this work.

- The children have excellent attitudes towards the subject. They respond very well in lessons and take great pride in their work. They use materials with care and sensitivity. They collaborate well in groups and are able to pick out good features of each others' drawings and suggest how work might be improved. They enjoy art, craft and design and participate enthusiastically in extra-curricular opportunities.

Quality of teaching and learning

- Teaching and learning are consistently good, with some outstanding features. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan interesting, well structured lessons which build knowledge, skills and understanding progressively. They share simple success criteria with children so that they know how to evaluate and improve their own work. There is some exemplary teaching, where children are helped to refine their skills further and make a creative and imaginative response. In some lessons, a specific focus for individual groups provides additional challenge. Teaching assistants support particular children well.
- Tracking of children's progress, especially in drawing, is good. The school places a strong emphasis on skills development which leads to very good progress in investigating and making. However, the assessment of children's exploration and development of ideas is not yet established. Consequently although progress is very good overall, opportunities for very able children in years 3 and 4 to achieve even more highly against all the strands of the National Curriculum are less secure.

Quality of curriculum

- The curriculum is outstanding. Progression from Foundation Stage to Year 4 is very clear and there are excellent opportunities for children to re-visit and build skills, knowledge and understanding. Children are given opportunities to work in two-dimensions and three-dimensions using a broad range of media, tools and techniques. Learning success criteria are evident in each half term's work, which focus on individual visual elements such as tone, colour and texture.
- Boys and girls are engaged and motivated by the well matched tasks and activities, which are often linked to other subject areas, such as history. The curriculum is further enriched by the annual arts fortnights, where children take part in creative workshops, often with visiting artists. These events are planned around themes such as Oriental or African art and also provide opportunities for visits to galleries, such as the Oriental Museum. They contribute well to spiritual, social, moral and cultural development.

Leadership and management of subject

- Leadership and management are outstanding. You place a high value on art, craft and design and creativity and your continual focus on high quality teaching and learning has a positive impact on the standards achieved in art, craft and design. The subject co-ordinator has an accurate understanding of

strengths and future priorities for the subject and her enthusiasm and expertise helps non-specialist colleagues to teach the subject with confidence and high expectations.

Inclusion

- The subject makes very good provision for all pupils. Children with learning difficulties and disabilities have full access to the curriculum and make very good progress. The subject has a positive effect on the enjoyment and achievement of every child and their capacity to make a positive contribution.

Subject issue: breadth, depth and creativity of provision and outcomes

- A broad range of opportunities for all children to succeed in art, craft and design is offered through the high quality curriculum. The very good teaching ensures that progress is very good and children are encouraged to refine and further develop their skills in depth, especially in drawing and painting. Creativity is clearly valued and children are encouraged to make choices and a personal response. Creative development is further enhanced through the arts fortnights, where there are opportunities for experimentation, collaboration and work on a large scale. Children say they enjoy this work, particularly when they can make their own choices, and they would like to do more.

An area for improvement, which we discussed, is:

- to raise standards still further, especially for more able children in Years 3 and 4, ensure that planning and assessment are more closely linked to all the strands of the National Curriculum.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop art, craft and design at 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

Carolyn Earlam
Additional Inspector