

# Making a mark: art, craft and design education

2008–11



Children see before they speak, make marks before they write, build before they walk. But their ability to appreciate what they observe, communicate what they think and feel, or make what they imagine and invent, is influenced by the quality of their art, craft and design education.

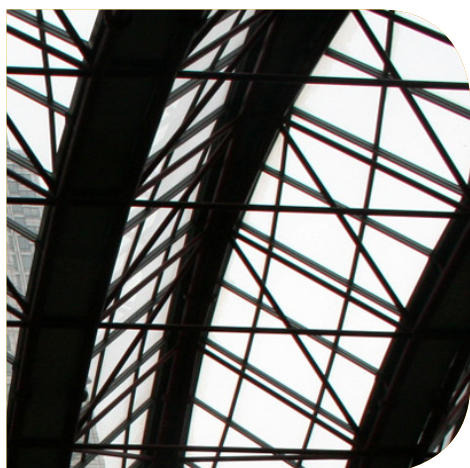
‘the notion that everyone can draw is not being kept alive beyond the early years of schooling’

## This survey explored:

- the quality of teaching, the curriculum and leadership and management in the subject, and the impact on pupils’ enjoyment and achievement
- the extent to which concerns about inclusion, creativity and drawing raised in the previous subject report have been successfully addressed.

## To gather evidence for this survey we:

- visited 91 primary, 86 secondary and seven special schools
- observed 993 lessons, evaluated school documents and pupils’ work and held discussions with staff and pupils
- analysed evidence from 69 college inspections of the subject
- focused on good practice in a further five primary and five secondary schools, three colleges and two universities
- observed artists in residence, held discussions with gallery educators, and visited exhibitions of pupils’ work
- organised a subject conference for pupils, community groups and leaders of initiatives focused on subject issues.



# Key findings

## Achievement

- Achievement was good or outstanding in 36 of the 91 primary and 48 of the 86 secondary schools. High standards were attained in examinations. Girls attained higher grades than boys.
- Enjoyment was strong across the age and ability range; this was reflected in high levels of early independence, positive attitudes in lessons and course take-up that compared well with other optional subjects.

## Teaching

- Teaching was good in around a third of primary and half of secondary schools inspected. The small proportion of outstanding teaching balanced more effectively individuality of teaching style with consistently strong impact on pupils' enjoyment and achievement.
- Teaching was more effective in early years and post-16 settings because there was a greater emphasis on personalisation, a better balance between experimentation and demonstration and more subtle and skilled use of assessment.
- There was little professional development for teachers which focused on improving pupils' key subject skills, including drawing. Whole-school approaches to assessment and literacy across the curriculum were interpreted poorly, to the detriment of the subject.

## Curriculum

- In all phases of education pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development grew through topics that embraced their personal interests and experiences. They responded powerfully and sensitively to emotive themes when well taught. However, links with related areas of the curriculum were underdeveloped.
- Strategies to promote the inclusion of boys had proved effective. Staff in primary and secondary schools had given careful thought to broadening the appeal of subject matter. Widening options to include photography had raised boys' achievement in 11 secondary schools. Inadequate provision failed to address boys' inclusion or underachievement.

## Leadership and management

- Subject leaders were also strong subject teachers and had a demonstrable impact on exemplifying high standards of teaching. But they did not all observe staff regularly enough to inform developmental feedback, tailored support or delegation of responsibilities.
- Initiatives led by national organisations to address the weaknesses identified in the previous report were highly effective in the schools involved in pilot work. Of the schools visited few were aware of this important work.
- Innovation and leadership in national initiatives at regional level by local authority specialists declined dramatically during the survey. Subject leaders were often too isolated to share best practice between primary, secondary schools and colleges.

## Confident drawing, creativity and enrichment for all?

- Pupils made a strong start in the Early Years Foundation Stage by developing confidence and creativity through mark-making. However, between Key Stages 1 and 3 pupils lacked confidence in drawing, to the detriment of their enjoyment.
- Work with creative practitioners raised pupils' creative aspirations and achievement in primary and secondary schools, but this was rarely an entitlement. The role of college students in schools was underdeveloped.
- Art galleries shared exciting approaches to teaching and learning that had intensified the work of pupils and teachers in primary and secondary schools following their visits. However, less than a third of schools organised visits in Key Stage 3.
- Insufficient advice and guidance given to pupils and their parents and carers, resulted in missed opportunities for pupils to nurture their interest and talent in their leisure time or pursue external courses that were well suited to their needs.

The full report *Making a mark: art, craft and design education 2008–11*, includes further details and case studies of effective practice.

The report is available on Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/110135](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/110135).