

Aviation House  
125 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231  
F 020 7421 6855  
[enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



18 February 2011

Mr H Hennebry  
Principal  
Uckfield Community Technology College  
Downsview Crescent  
Uckfield  
East Sussex  
TN22 3DJ

Dear Mr Hennebry

### **Ofsted 2010–11 subject survey inspection programme: music**

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and students, during my visit on 7 and 8 February 2011 to look at work in music.

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, students and parents; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of students' work; and observation of eight lessons and a choir rehearsal.

The overall effectiveness of music is good.

### **Achievement in music**

Achievement in music is good.

Students in Key Stage 3 achieve well, making good progress in relation to their starting points. Over time, students in Years 7 and 8 have made relatively better progress than those in Year 9, where an earlier lack of continuity in teaching had affected their learning. However, their rate of progress has now improved and standards are above average.

The proportion of students studying music for GCSE is above average. They make good progress and standards are high in all aspects of the subject. The well-developed listening skills of students in Year 11, for example, enabled them to identify how traditional Indian music had been modified when used in 20<sup>th</sup> century popular music.

While the proportion of students involved in instrumental lessons and in extra-curricular activities is currently satisfactory, numbers are increasing. Opportunities for singing are well developed with, for example, good numbers of boys and girls performing confidently and expressively in the four-part Chamber Choir.

Students enjoy their music-making and cooperate well with each other and with their teachers. Their personal development through music is good in Key Stage 3 and outstanding in Key Stage 4 where students demonstrate initiative and independence in their learning. Some students in Year 9 say that they would like to have more regular opportunities to share their views and ideas about provision in music.

In the sixth form, standards are average in music and above average in music technology. Students show good independent learning skills in developing their extended creative portfolios. Not all students have traditional musical or instrumental skills and, in relation to their starting points, make good progress.

### **Quality of teaching in music**

The quality of teaching in music is satisfactory.

The most effective lessons, which are good or outstanding, have a clear focus on learning, direct involvement in music-making and an emphasis on aural development. Activities are well sequenced and, as a result, enable students to make good progress.

In a minority of cases, planning does not identify sufficiently clearly or succinctly what students are intended to learn, as opposed to do, in lessons. In these lessons, too much time is spent on verbal explanation at the expense of musical engagement.

Information and communication technology (ICT) is used very effectively in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form to support work in creating, organising and arranging music. Planning and examples of students' work show that ICT is used well in Key Stage 3. In one case, however, lesson planning indicated an overemphasis on the use of notation software too early in the creative process.

Assessment is often used well to identify students' ongoing progress. In these instances, there is a good focus on assessing the quality of students' responses and overall musical understanding. In other instances, however, assessment is less effective because it places too much emphasis on awarding National Curriculum levels for individual activities without considering students' overall musical understanding.

### **Quality of the curriculum in music**

The quality of the curriculum in music is good.

The scheme of work for all key stages has been re-written since the appointment of the subject leader in September 2009. It provides a clear

sense of progression and a clear outline of what students are expected to achieve musically by the end of each unit of work. The scheme for Key Stage 3 includes a good range of musical styles and genres, with a good overall balance of musical content and activities.

The college provides a good range of extra-curricular activities, including those, such as the Chamber Choir and Jazz Band, for more able musicians alongside others, such as the African Drumming ensemble, which include students who do not receive specialist instrumental or vocal tuition. The department recognises that, while good numbers are involved in individual activities, there is potential to increase the overall involvement of students across the college as a whole.

Effective partnerships which enhance the provision for students include those with schools in the locality and abroad, professional musicians and organisations, and community groups and activities. The college's well-established and strong partnership with the local authority music service provides good opportunities for students to benefit through involvement in instrumental lessons and musical activities and events within and beyond the college. The carnival arts group provides good opportunities for students to be involved in music alongside other arts activities, while also contributing positively to community cohesion.

### **Effectiveness of leadership and management in music**

The effectiveness of the leadership and management in music is good.

Senior leaders and the subject leader share a clear vision for music which recognises the importance of enabling all to be involved. Since the appointment of the subject leader, significant developments have taken place which demonstrate outstanding aspects of leadership and management. For example, the curriculum has been reorganised, resources improved, opportunities for involvement in music broadened, and greater emphasis placed on enthusing and encouraging students to be more actively involved in music-making. Parents and students speak very positively about the impact of these changes.

Significant progress has been made in a short period of time, while accurate self-evaluation has identified that further developments are needed, for example, to improve the consistency of the quality of teaching. The impact of actions that have already been taken, however, provides secure evidence of the capacity for sustained improvement.

### **Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:**

building on existing good practice and increasing consistency in teaching by:

identifying clearly and precisely what students are intended to learn, as opposed to do, in lessons

planning well-sequenced activities that engage students directly in first-hand musical experiences

placing greater emphasis on musical illustration and demonstration rather than verbal explanations

continuing to develop the involvement of students in activities beyond the classroom.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop music in the school.

As I 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. Except in the case of academies, a copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

**David Williams**  
**Additional Inspector**