

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



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Mrs C Evans
Headteacher
Parks Primary School
New Parks Crescent
Leicester
Leicestershire
LE3 9NZ

Dear Mrs Evans

Ofsted 2011–12 subject survey inspection programme: music

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and pupils, during my visit on 29 June 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: discussions with staff and pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; and observation, jointly with you, of four lessons, an assembly for the whole school and individual instrumental lessons.

The overall effectiveness of music is good.

Achievement in music

Achievement in music is good.

- Few children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have prior experience of singing and playing instruments. They enjoy a well-balanced variety of music activities and this enables them to make expected progress.
- Well-planned class lessons and careful teaching ensure that pupils sing, create and discuss their music regularly. This ensures that the firm music foundations, established in the Early Years Foundation Stage, are built on and developed as pupils move through the school. By the end of Year 6, standards, in all aspects of music education, are broadly average and pupils make good progress.
- Whole-class additional music activities, for example Djembe drumming and singing lessons, compensate for the fact that very few pupils receive

individual instrumental lessons. The choir rehearses regularly and is attended by both boys and girls. Music events and concerts, for example, performing at the De Montfort Hall and Leicester Cathedral, are very much enjoyed by pupils and contribute significantly to their understanding and appreciation of music. However, the school recognises that not all groups are equally represented.

Quality of teaching in music

The quality of teaching in music is good.

- The best learning takes place when lessons are well planned with a clear focus and structure so that pupils' musical skills, knowledge and understanding are developed systematically. Lessons moves at a brisk pace and generally pupils are challenged to demonstrate examples of their work musically and make suggestions for improvement. Pupils enjoy their lessons and cooperate well with each other.
- Pupils' progress is assessed regularly and most teachers make good use of this information, together with observations during lessons, to plan future learning. Although audio and video recordings are made, they are not always used by pupils and their teachers to identify how well they are doing and how they can improve their work.
- The weakest lessons are those taught by a member of the local authority, for pupils in Years 5 and 6, who are learning to play the Tabla. These lessons are poorly planned; pupils take turns to do the same thing, weaknesses are not corrected and, consequently, pupils' progress is unsatisfactory.

Quality of the curriculum in music

The quality of the curriculum in music is good.

- An appropriate scheme of work has been developed which ensures that pupils make good progress because their musical understanding and skills are developed systematically. Current national initiatives, for example the national singing strategy, are used successfully when choosing songs for the whole school to learn and to perform during assembly.
- While successful planning ensures that all aspects of music learning are developed, leaders acknowledge that information and communication technology (ICT) is not used as frequently as it could be.
- The school has organised successful music links with other schools, for example the Djembe drumming work with another primary school. This has resulted in the school now owning, and using regularly, a class set of drums. These and other music activities extend pupils' interest and their involvement in music learning.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in music

The effectiveness of leadership and management in music is good.

- The subject leader is well informed about current music developments. Her monitoring is thorough and this information is used to inform future music activities and support for particular staff where needed. Senior leaders and governors value music highly and provide considerable funding, especially for pupils who receive individual instrumental lessons.
- Sensible use has been made of the standards funding money delegated by the local authority. This has allowed whole-class singing to take place this year, which has helped, together with regular singing during the week, to improve the overall quality of this important aspect of music making.
- A thorough self-evaluation was prepared for the inspection, including identifying that not all groups of pupils take part in music activities. The developments, already recognised, were confirmed during the inspection. This, together with the improving musical outcomes for pupils, secures good capacity for further improvement.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- improving the quality of teaching by:
 - using audio recordings regularly to help pupils assess their work and understand how to improve it further
 - including ICT regularly in music learning so that pupils have the opportunity to use a different sound source
- monitoring pupils' participation rates closely to ensure that all groups are equally represented.

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

Marianne Young
Her Majesty's Inspector