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Mr M Kerridge  
Headteacher  
Madeley High School  
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Dear Mr Kerridge

### **Ofsted 2011–12 subject survey inspection programme: music**

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and students, during my visit on 1 and 2 November 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 and students; a meeting with the head, and teaching and learning coordinator, of Staffordshire Performing Arts; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of students' work; and observation of five class lessons, two instrumental lessons, and two extra-curricular musical rehearsals.

The overall effectiveness of music is satisfactory.

### **Achievement in music**

Achievement in music is satisfactory.

- Given their prior musical abilities and experiences, students in Key Stage 3 make satisfactory progress and attain standards that are broadly average. There are strengths in using information and communications technology (ICT) to create and manipulate musical sounds but equally there are weaknesses in the development of singing.
- Slightly higher than average proportions of students opt for GCSE music. Typically, they are more able, having attained above national expectations at the end of Key Stage 3. They make satisfactory progress to attain above average standards overall at GCSE, although aspects of

performance are stronger and aspects of listening and appraising are comparatively weaker.

- During musical activities students show good levels of cooperation and behaviour. Teachers and students alike are very supportive and encouraging of each other. As a result, music makes a strong contribution to the ethos of the school. The teachers' efforts are highly valued by the students and are a positive factor in students' choice of music in Key Stage 4.

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

The quality of teaching in music is satisfactory.

- Lessons are well ordered and working relationships and behaviour are good. Students cooperate well in pairs and groups. ICT is used confidently in teaching and learning.
- Students are clear about the criteria used to assess learning. However, these are focused on technical aspects and expectations for their musical responses are not expounded and explored in sufficient detail. As a result, opportunities are missed for both teachers and students to demonstrate their musical understanding.
- Students are set tests of theoretical and factual knowledge as they begin Key Stage 3 and work is assessed regularly. However, insufficient use is made of information about students' individual abilities when lessons are planned. Too frequently, all students start from the same point and no account is taken of their different musical abilities.
- Instrumental lessons are well organised and there is good communication between instrumental teachers and the head of music. This makes a particularly positive contribution to students' standards of performance in Key Stage 4.

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

The quality of the curriculum in music is satisfactory.

- The school has begun to review the curriculum in Key Stage 3. Schemes of work now include cross-curricular links and aspects of thematic development. However, progression is based on technical aspects and insufficient attention is paid to musical progression. While the breadth of listening activities is appropriate, there is no planning for the development of singing across the key stages and opportunities for playing musical instruments are not sufficiently frequent, structured or planned progressively.
- The music leader works hard to provide interesting extra-curricular activities which are valued by the students. All students are welcomed and there is a positive and encouraging atmosphere created by both students and staff.
- One-off opportunities provided in partnership with the local university to enrich the experiences of selected Year 9 and GCSE students add breadth

to the curriculum, but these are not integrated into the school's regular curriculum programme.

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management in music is satisfactory.

- You, your senior leaders and the head of the department have a realistic view of its effectiveness and are open and honest about what needs to be done to improve provision further. Together, you have a clear and determined vision to improve students' learning and ensure that music has a higher profile within the school.
- The school uses the instrumental tuition service from Staffordshire Performing Arts but also uses independent piano and string tuition because it feels these are better suited to the school. Communication is effective with the peripatetic staff and they give of their time to support the school in concerts.

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

- completing the revisions to the schemes of work ensuring that:
  - singing is a regular feature in lessons, particularly throughout Key Stage 3
  - the development of students' musical skills is planned systematically as they move through the school
  - sufficient opportunities are planned for students to demonstrate their understanding through musical responses
- ensuring that lessons take account of students' different starting points or prior musical development and abilities so that musical tasks are matched accurately to individual's needs.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop music 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

**Adrian Guy**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**