

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)



1 December 2011

Mr I Appleton  
Headteacher  
Testwood Sports College  
Testwood Lane  
Totton  
Southampton  
SO40 3ZW

Dear Mr Appleton

### **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 7 and 8 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 from all year groups; scrutiny of relevant documentation; a meeting with the Hampshire County Music Inspector; analysis of students' work; and observation of four lessons, including an individual instrumental lesson.

The overall effectiveness of music is inadequate.

### **Achievement in music**

Achievement in music is inadequate.

- Students' attainment at Key Stage 3 is well below national expectations. Their progress, given their starting points, is inadequate. There are no areas of particular strength in their work, though they have opportunities to play a reasonable range of instruments, albeit in simple tasks.
- In Key Stage 4, in recent years, students have traditionally performed well at GCSE, with higher than average proportions gaining A\* to C grades, though below average proportions gaining A\* and A grades. However, there are currently no GCSE music students. The new Performing Arts BTEC has attracted more students with special educational needs and/or disabilities than did GCSE, bringing improvement in an aspect of inclusion. However, the musical requirements of the new BTEC course, as it is

taught, are fewer than GCSE would typically require. Consequently, overall, students' musical achievement is low.

- The proportions of students taking instrumental lessons and benefiting from extra-curricular activities in music are very low. There is no school choir, orchestra or similar instrumental groups. The main options are to take part in 'Talent Show' events or to join the chorus for pop musical productions. After Year 8, when music lessons cease, few students engage in school musical activities at all.

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

The quality of teaching in music is inadequate.

- Lessons are taught in an encouraging and friendly style which students like. Staff show suitable musical expertise. However, these strengths are insufficiently used. Lessons have too little practical musical content. Expectations are low. In Key Stage 3, too much time is spent on talk and undemanding activity, such as filling in simple worksheets. Staff do not routinely model musicianship or perform for students, to encourage them to make musical responses.
- Assessments of students in Key Stage 3 are based on single, unchallenging pieces of work rather than a broader overview of each student's musical development. They are not, therefore, valid or reliable and do not lead to suitably demanding activities being set. Links with primary schools are very limited and, as a result, the school's understanding of students' prior learning is very weak.
- Technology is poorly used. Students have very few opportunities, for example, to record their work to help them to improve it or to use appropriate software to enhance their learning.
- There are no partnerships to provide instrumental lessons, for example with the Hampshire Music Service. Only one student has instrumental lessons in school. The teaching observed for this individual was good.

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

The quality of the curriculum in music is inadequate.

- The Key Stage 3 scheme of work contains a mixture of themes but does not provide a coherent or challenging progression of musical ideas and concepts. Furthermore, the time given to the subject, and pattern of delivery, has changed each year, so every cohort has had a different experience without sufficient consistency or stability. The current Year 8 students, for example, had very little music teaching in Year 7, partly because of insufficient staffing, and are largely starting their secondary school music education from scratch.
- The musical components of the new BTEC Performing Arts course, the only class music available beyond Year 8, are few. The main musical activity for the current Year 10 group was only to perform together the

song 'Stand By Me' when in Year 9 and there is little evidence of the quality of this performance. No more music is planned for the course.

- There is very little singing in lessons, no opportunities in or outside of lessons to sing in parts and few chances to experience a repertoire beyond pop.
- The accommodation is a limiting factor. The single music classroom is quite small and its rigid formation of desks in rows disallows any helpful variety in the organisation of lessons, especially practical tasks. The two practise or breakout rooms are both rather cluttered, and uninspiringly decorated and set out. However, there is a reasonable range of instruments available for students.

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management in music is inadequate.

- Senior staff are aware that music is an underperforming subject but do not have the specialist knowledge to evaluate and develop it rigorously. Music staff look insufficiently outside of the school, and undertake too little subject professional development, to promote good practice although you have recently decided to use the support and advice available from Hampshire Music Service. Some Key Stage 3 lessons are currently taught by non-specialists but there is no formal monitoring of these lessons.
- The school has a strong, and understandable, commitment to ensuring that lessons and extra-curricular activities are accessible and relevant to the students. However, the effect of this, in music, has been to remove most opportunities for students to experience any genre beyond pop, severely limiting breadth and aspiration.
- Through leadership from its well-developed sports specialism, the school has developed much BTEC provision with emerging success. The physical education (PE) department is clear, however, that to meet all students' needs, it must continue to provide GCSE PE alongside the sport BTEC. It is resourced to do so, as well as provide lessons in all year groups. The music department, in contrast, with one part-time teacher, is not resourced sufficiently to contribute to BTEC provision, offer GCSE courses and teach every class in Years 7 and 8.

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

- raising attainment in Key Stage 3, so that, by summer 2013, it reaches national expectations at least, by:
  - developing a new or revised scheme of work which ensures the progressive and challenging development of clearly identified musical skills, involving significant practical activity applied in a range of genres and styles
  - ensuring that teachers demonstrate and model musicianship in lessons

- consider adapting the accommodation so that there is more flexibility in grouping and better spaces for practical work in lessons
  - making more robust assessments of students, including baseline assessments
- improving the school's capacity to develop its provision and increasing the range of outcomes for students in music, by:
  - ensuring that the music department has the necessary staffing resources to deliver a full range of courses and lessons, thus avoiding over-frequent changes in patterns of provision
  - improving the use of staff professional development, external advice from organisations including the Hampshire Music Service and links with other schools, including feeder primary schools
  - evaluating students' outcomes in music, and provision, with greater rigour
- raising subject aspirations and providing broader opportunities for students to participate in music, by:
  - increasing significantly the availability and promotion of instrumental teaching
  - improving the opportunities for students to sing in school
  - evaluating carefully what are realistic and suitably challenging aspirations for the musical development of all students in the school
  - strengthening provision in Key Stage 4 by re-introducing a GCSE qualification in music.

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.

Yours sincerely

**Robin Hammerton**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**