

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

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



1 March 2012

Mr John Smith
Headteacher
Hollington Primary School
Hollington Old Lane
St Leonards-on-Sea
East Sussex
TN38 9DS

Dear Mr Smith

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 12 January 2012 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 pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work including recordings; and observation of four lessons, a drum club practice and a singing assembly.

The overall effectiveness of music is satisfactory.

Achievement in music

Achievement in music is satisfactory.

- Pupils are often 'wide eyed' with enthusiasm in music lessons. They benefit from active musical learning, making satisfactory progress but with some gaps in their learning. For example, Year 6 pupils beat time accurately and can explain how they use this skill but are unsure what is meant by beats in a bar or the importance of this. They have experience of various instruments but are sometimes uncertain about how they are played, or which are brass, woodwind, percussion or strings.
- Pupils in all year groups enjoy singing a range of simple songs. They do so with accuracy, control and confidence. Many are ready to undertake more complex activity such as part singing.

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are confident to explore and discuss instruments with interest and interest and sing with appropriate accuracy and enjoyment.
- Pupils enjoy regular participation in concerts and productions. This allows some to develop their particular interests and abilities, through composing songs for example. Pupils in the drum club play with reasonable precision, aptly using a range of techniques including scraping. However, the overall proportion of pupils involved in extra-curricular activities and instrumental lessons is low.

Quality of teaching in music

The quality of teaching in music is satisfactory.

- Many teachers and teaching assistants have an interest and useful expertise in music. They enjoy teaching the subject and many are building their confidence in singing and playing to pupils in lessons. Consequently, pupils are secure in joining in actively. Nursery pupils really like the way their teacher frequently sings to them. Some staff, including the premises manager, have recently formed a band together as role models to encourage pupils to make music.
- Lessons have clear musical purposes and are appropriately paced. However, too often they are aimed at the whole class and everyone does the same activity. Although all pupils benefit from such lessons, there are limited opportunities for them to work in groups or to carry out higher-level tasks, as appropriate. Pupils do not always see how all the practical activities they do link together and to their other musical learning.
- The school has a fully equipped music recording studio. This is well used to support productions and other high-profile activities but it is not widely enough used in day-to-day lessons to help pupils to listen to and evaluate their work.

Quality of the curriculum in music

The quality of the curriculum in music is satisfactory.

- The time allocated to music in lessons and assemblies is just sufficient to cover a fair range of active musical experiences. However, some pupils are removed from music lessons and assemblies to undertake additional numeracy and literacy sessions or interventions. This diminishes their opportunities to have fair and equal access to the full breadth of the music curriculum.
- Many pupils learn to play the recorder in lessons and a Year 3 class learn the ukulele together through a teacher from the East Sussex Music Service, funded by the 'Wider Opportunities' programme. The music subject leader is helpfully extending this opportunity by teaching ukulele, and how to use and understand simple chords, to all Year 3 and Year 4 pupils.

- The music scheme of work has been very recently redesigned by the subject leader. Although basic, it identifies suitable continuity and progression of musical skills and ideas throughout the school. Staff have responded to it well and are implementing it diligently. However, the subject leader is aware that there remain inconsistencies in the way it is used and taught throughout the school and that consequently it requires greater detail, clearer guidance about extending more able pupils, and more robust monitoring of its impact. This is planned for. Pupils' musical composition is less well developed than their performing and listening.
- The school choir ceased operation during the past year while the deputy headteacher, who leads it, was seconded elsewhere. She has returned this term and it is being reinstated. You recognise that more might have been done to sustain the choir and that scope exists for more musical activities outside of lesson time, including for younger pupils.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in music

The effectiveness of leadership and management in music is satisfactory.

- You are convinced of the importance of music to the school and successfully encourage active participation in it by staff and pupils. You are further aware of the relevance of a broad and motivating curriculum to assuring high standards in basic skills. However, the immediate pressure to improve national test results in English and mathematics diminishes confidence within the school to undertake valuable longer-term curriculum development activity. Nevertheless, you have recently appointed a music subject leader with specialist expertise.
- The subject leader has, in a short time, made a clear, positive impact and rightly sees the potential in the school. He has evaluated provision and outcomes in music accurately and has begun to implement the resulting action plan. This useful document focuses on the right areas, and is guiding improvement, but lacks clear timescales and targets for pupils' participation and musical attainment.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- improving music teaching so that it is consistently at least good by the summer of 2013 by:
 - ensuring that musical activity in lessons is constantly challenging and well matched to the needs of all pupils
 - encouraging staff to develop further still their confidence in singing and playing to pupils in lessons
 - making sure that pupils understand clearly how different parts of their musical learning fit together and that staff explain and discuss prior and future learning with pupils
- designing the music curriculum so that it

- contains sufficient detail about the challenging practical musical activities to be used in lessons, including for more able pupils
 - ensures consistency in practice across the school and staff in each year group are clear about how the musical work they lead links to that in previous and later years
 - includes the use of technology to record pupils' work, helping them to evaluate this and to improve on their previous best
 - increases the opportunities for pupils to compose music
- offering pupils a wider range of musical experiences and ensuring their equal opportunities by:
- immediately ceasing the practice of withdrawing particular pupils from music lessons and assemblies to carry out other work
 - developing opportunities for pupils to sing and play instruments together outside of lessons, aiming that at any time at least one in five pupils across the school, from all groups, are involved
 - increasing the proportion of pupils taking instrumental lessons in partnership, as appropriate, with the East Sussex Music Service
- improving the leadership and management of the subject further by:
- refining the subject action plan so that it includes clear, suitably ambitious and timed targets for outcomes for pupils, and
 - ensuring that progress against these targets is regularly monitored.

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

Robin Hammerton
Her Majesty's Inspector