

Music Stuff

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Chanan Tomlin

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.^{1, 2}

Information about the school

Music Stuff is a non-denominational mixed, day special school for students with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school was registered in January 2012 to admit up to 15 students between the ages of 11 and 16. It opened in March 2012 and is located on a main road in a business centre in the Openshaw area of Manchester. The school takes students from local schools, a local pupil referral unit or from the local authority and wider community. Currently, there are 12 full-time and two part-time students on roll; four students have a statement of special educational needs.

The school aims 'to develop human potential as a way of increasing a sense of personal identity, self-belief and confidence, as well as providing access to experience and knowledge'. Through the use of modern tools and technology, it seeks to provide students with musical and creative opportunities to develop their interests or talents. It endeavours to allow young people who have not previously been successful in mainstream school settings to be prepared so they can re-join mainstream education. This was the school's first inspection.

Evaluation of the school

The overall quality of education is good and the school meets its aims. The curriculum provided by the school is satisfactory. Teaching and assessment are good and students make good progress in their learning. The provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory and behaviour is good. The school's provision for the welfare, health and safety and the safeguarding of students is good. The school meets all of the regulations for independent schools.

Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory. The school provides education for students who have not succeeded in mainstream education. The curriculum is designed to provide students with challenging targets and to provide them with a sense of accomplishment and an appreciation of their potential in order to

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents.

² www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents.

reintegrate them into mainstream education. It is based on the National Curriculum with a strong focus on speaking and listening, reading, writing and numeracy.

The curriculum provides experiences in all of the required areas of learning. Subjects taught in Key Stages 3 and 4 include mathematics, English, information and communication technology (ICT), science, history, geography, physical education (PE), art and music. The curriculum for Key Stage 4 is less well developed. Although the school has plans to provide older students with the opportunity to pursue accredited courses such as GCSE, this provision is not yet in place. The school provides consistent pastoral support and helps students improve in their personal and social development; it has a personal, social, citizenship and health education (PSCHE) policy that it implements well. Students are taught about leading healthy lifestyles and about their duties as citizens of this country through PSCHE. The curriculum is planned carefully; it is supported with schemes of work that enable students from different age groups and with varying abilities to be interested and engaged in group activities. The school has a good range of resources to support the curriculum including musical equipment and instruments and a good supply of computers.

Students are encouraged to develop their talents through music and art; a focus on music creates an environment where students pursue and share their interests. The curriculum is supported with some educational trips including to museums, a local library and local college. Personal development is supported through activities out of school that are awarded to students for good behaviour and progress. During these activities students enjoy each other's company and interact well with adults and others in the wider community.

Students receive careers guidance and advice on their futures through regular visits from careers advisors, a strong focus on core skills, PSCHE and discussions with staff. Students appreciate the education that they receive and acknowledge the progress that they make at school. One student said 'Everything is good about the school – nothing is bad about it!'

Teaching and assessment are good and ensures that students make good progress in their learning. Teachers have a good understanding of the aptitudes and interests of the students. They plan lessons well and take good account of the range of abilities in the classroom to ensure that students are interested, challenged and kept on task. During lessons, students, including those with a statement of special educational needs, are consistently engaged; they work independently and take part in class discussions. Often, they offer their own insights and ask pertinent questions.

The school has good systems for behaviour management. It has high expectations for good behaviour; the school demands that students show their appreciation and respect for learning through displaying good manners and by 'watching their language'. Teachers achieve this through being firm and consistent about their expectations alongside being understanding and compassionate. Teachers have developed good relationships with their students; students respond well to the

strategies that their teachers use to ensure their good behaviour and engagement in lessons.

Systems for assessing academic progress are good. Students undergo baseline assessments when they start school and this informs the approaches to teaching adopted and the selection of resources used to support each individual student. Teachers assess students' progress, engagement and attitudes to learning on a daily basis and keep careful records. Systems are in place to identify the need to provide extra support quickly and to adjust and maintain this additional provision as required. Regular assessments inform the ways that teachers plan their lessons and ensure that students make consistent and sustained progress.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students is satisfactory. Students experience spirituality through music, art, PSCE and through gaining insights into ways of looking at life's purpose through the education provided for them. Strong pastoral care and guidance provides them with a good understanding of moral issues and what is expected of them as students. They learn about being responsible citizens and members of the community and about public services and institutions through citizenship lessons. Students grow in self-esteem and confidence as they engage and progress in their studies. Students get along very well together. A student new to the school said that he feels very welcome. Another student said that the school is 'like a giant family, there is no bullying and small arguments are sorted out quickly'

Behaviour during lessons and around school is good; students are polite, well-mannered and friendly. The atmosphere at school is calm and inviting; students contribute to this because they enjoy a sense of fulfilment and self-worth. Although attendance rates vary, students are punctual to lessons and teachers start with a sense of determined urgency in order to engage students quickly. Students have good attitudes towards learning; they like their teachers and appreciate their hard work. One student said 'Teaching is good; lessons are fun - not boring!'

Students gain some understanding and appreciation of different cultures through music, citizenship and discussions. For example, they learn about music from different parts of the world and how to say 'good morning' in different languages. However, this provision is limited and there are no lessons in religious education to help them to better understand and respect those with different beliefs about life and about ways to live.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The provision for students' welfare, health and safety is good. The school has a comprehensive safeguarding policy that is implemented well to ensure that students are kept safe. Staff, including the designated officer, are trained to the required level and refresher training is provided for everyone yearly. A safer recruitment policy is in

place and is implemented appropriately. All of the required policies and procedures, including those for behaviour management and anti-bullying have full regard to the welfare, health and safety of students and are implemented effectively.

Thorough risk assessments are carried out for activities, the premises and all outdoor and educational visits; high levels of supervision ensure that students are safe. Students are advised on how to keep safe and healthy and lead healthy lifestyles. The school works with child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) and other agencies to support students according to their needs. Fire risk assessments are carried out regularly; fire drills are held every month and are duly recorded. Admission and attendance registers meet requirements.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school has carried out the necessary checks for all staff. It maintains a single central register which complies with regulations.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The school operates from a dual unit in an industrial estate and has two floors. The accommodation enables the curriculum to be implemented effectively. The ground floor has one good-sized teaching room, three small studios, a 'vocal' room, a kitchen and a toilet for male students. The first floor contains offices for the school, storage and a washroom for female students. Students use a grassy area and a local park to relax and play during break times. A local sports centre is used to support the provision of physical education.

Provision of information

The school prospectus is clear, up to date and informative and includes all of the required details. Parents and carers are sent progress reports that keep them informed about their child's progress every term.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The procedures for handling complaints meet requirements. There have been no formal complaints in the last year.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations').

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development.

- Further develop the Key Stage 4 curriculum to ensure that students are able work towards suitable accredited qualifications such as GCSE.
- Further develop the ways that students can acquire an understanding of and respect for different cultures and religions.

Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education		✓		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils			✓	
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		✓		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		✓		

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development			✓	
The behaviour of pupils		✓		

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils		✓		
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School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Special – for students with emotional, behavioural and social difficulties (EBSD)		
Date school opened	March 2012		
Age range of pupils	11–16		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 9	Girls: 3	Total: 12
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 2	Girls: 0	Total: 2
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 3	Girls: 1	Total: 4
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 1	Girls: 0	Total: 1
Annual fees (day pupils)	£7,600		
Address of school	Units 3 & 4 The Cuthbert Centre 877 Ashton Old Road Openshaw Manchester M11 2NA		
Telephone number	0161 2238700		
Email address	music.stuff@virgin.net		
Headteacher	Dan McCann		
Proprietor	Andrew Portersmith		

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



21 December 2012

Dear Students,

Inspection of Music Stuff

I really enjoyed inspecting your school. Thank you for making me feel very welcome. I found you to be friendly and courteous and appreciate the time that you took to speak to me. I spent my time at school observing lessons, speaking to staff and looking through documents. I scrutinised your work and examined the progress made by past students as well. I found that you make good progress at school especially in your attitudes towards learning.

I found that your school provides a good level of education and is satisfactory in the ways that it promotes your spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. I found your behaviour to be good and the ways that the school promotes your welfare, health and safety to be good.

I have suggested that the school further develop the curriculum for Key Stage 4 to ensure that older students can work towards accredited qualifications such as GCSE. I have also suggested that the school further develops the ways that you gain an understanding of and respect for different cultures and religions.

I wish you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Chanan Tomlin
Lead Inspector