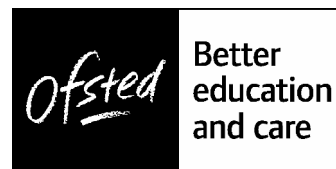


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13 March 2007

Mrs B Haigh
Headteacher
St Gabriel's C of E Primary School
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Dear Mrs Haigh

Ofsted Subject Inspection Programme – Music

Thank you for your assistance and hospitality and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 5-6 February 2007. At the end of the inspection I fed back my judgements and this letter is to confirm my findings.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the subject, the visit had a particular focus on the extent to which every pupil is benefiting from your music provision. It also explored the links you have developed with other schools and agencies, such as the local Music Service.

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 unless to highlight exceptional practice. In such circumstances the school would be contacted prior to publication to agree the exact wording. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included: interviews with members of staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of lessons and extra-curricular activities.

The overall effectiveness of music was judged to be good. There is good capacity for improvement.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are good with areas of strength, particularly in instrumental work and singing.

- Pupils enjoy their music lessons and sing very well with careful attention to phrasing, diction and expression. Many have a very good sense of rhythm and are able to accompany their singing with percussion instruments.
- Pupils' progress is good and they achieve broadly in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and above that expected nationally by the end of Year 6. However the progress for a few pupils is limited as they are not challenged sufficiently to reach higher attainment levels.
- Pupils are able to describe effectively key musical features which they have learnt in the classroom and from their instrumental lessons.
- Many pupils have instrumental tuition within and outside of school. Several pupils perform to a high standard and all enjoy taking part both in school music events and those with the local community. Many pupils commented on their sense of pride when performing. These events provide outstanding opportunities to raise many pupils self-esteem.

Quality of teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good with significant strengths in the teaching of singing.

- Teaching is good and especially for the teaching of singing. The enthusiasm of all staff for the subject ensures that lessons are enjoyed by all pupils. Appropriately challenging songs are chosen and pupils learn to sing with expression and confidence.
- Learning is good, especially when teachers are responsive to pupils' specific needs, especially the needs of the younger pupils. Lessons are planned to include a variety of activities and ensure that all pupils are involved in their learning.
- Pupils are willing learners but the purpose of learning is not always made clear enough to them so that they can understand exactly how to improve their work. All pupils work hard in lessons but some more able pupils are not always challenged sufficiently during practical work.

Quality of the music curriculum and extra-curricular provision

The quality of the curriculum and extra-curricular provision is good with significant strengths in extra-curricular activities.

- Pupils receive weekly music lessons taught either by a specialist or their class teacher. They also enjoy a singing / hymn practice each

week. The curriculum is mainly based on a published scheme but includes references to many other teaching materials and songbooks. At present the use of information and communication technology (ICT) is under-represented as pupils' experience is limited to acoustic instruments.

- Lessons are taught in the hall and there is a very good range of percussion instruments for practical work. The space enables pupils to work in small groups.
- Several staff run a range of extra-curricular groups and these are well attended. Pupils commented 'music is fun there is so much to choose from'. Regular events ensure that different groups of pupils are able to perform regularly to a range of different audiences.

Leadership and management of music

The leadership and management of music are good.

- You and your governing body are very supportive of music and ensure that the subject permeates many aspects of school life. There is a very good approach to inclusion and the subject has a high profile within the school and local community. The co-ordinator supports other staff who teach music well and provides extra resources and suggestions when necessary.
- The school benefits considerably from having a specialist music teacher. They use their experience and enthusiasm for the subject well to develop and extend all pupils musical horizons. However, there is currently no specific system to record individual pupils' musical skills and abilities so that progress and development of different aspects of music learning can be measured.

Subject issues

Data Collection

- The information staff collect gives them a good understanding about pupils' learning and their musical experiences both within and outside of school.

Partnership Links

- Very good links with the Parish and Cathedral enables many pupils to perform regularly in different venues. The Christian ethos permeates much of school life and sets a clear direction for some music learning, especially singing.
- The school provides instrumental lessons mainly through their own peripatetic staff. Many pupils also take part in musical festivals organised by the music service.

- The good link established between the school and a local secondary school enables members of the orchestra to work with other music teachers and older students.

Inclusion

- All pupils are included well in class lessons and they are all given opportunity to learn a musical instrument. The school ensures that all choices are met wherever possible. Frequent performances and concerts ensure that all pupils are involved regularly.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- increasing the use of ICT and planning time into lessons to record pupils' work as it is being developed
- making sure that all pupils are aware of the musical purpose of the lessons and are given appropriate challenge during practical work.

I very much hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop music in your school.

As I explained in my previous letter, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be published on Ofsted's website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

In 6-12 months after the inspection visit, we would like to gather information on the impact of this inspection on the improvements in this subject in your school. To this end you may be contacted by telephone or sent a questionnaire to complete. We appreciate your co-operation in this evaluation.

Yours sincerely

Marianne Young
Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools