

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404045
F 020 7421 6855
www.ofsted.gov.uk



14 March 2007

Mrs G Stubbs
Headteacher
Wensley Fold (VC) Church of England Primary School
Manor Road
Blackburn
Lancashire
BB2 6LX

Dear Mrs Stubbs

Ofsted Subject Inspection Programme – Music

Thank you for your assistance and hospitality, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 06 and 07 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 outstanding. There is excellent capacity for improvement.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are outstanding.

- Pupils enjoy their music lessons. They play instruments confidently, with expression and have a very good understanding of how to play together in groups. Pupils select instruments carefully and talk knowledgeably about different musical styles and composers. They sing well and are familiar with a broad range of songs and musical styles. Pupils talked enthusiastically about the different songs they sing in assembly and summed up their feelings for this by saying, 'it's good to mix cultures through song'.
- Progress through the school is excellent and pupils achieve well above national expectations by the end of Year 6. Work is planned carefully to enable all pupils, including those who are at the early stages of learning English to achieve well.
- Pupils are competent users of computers; they select sounds carefully and understand how to use different ways of writing down their compositions.
- The inclusive nature of music fostered throughout the school contributes exceptionally well to pupils' personal development and their self-confidence, qualities which many of them display when performing.

Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding.

- The meticulous planning and range of supporting materials used in lessons means that learning is fun and pupils are always clear about the musical purpose of lessons. Challenge is appropriate for all pupils and they all want to do their best in lessons. Teachers' clear enthusiasm for the subject, which is evident in lessons, ensures pupils enjoy a rich and wide ranging diet of musical activities.
- Excellent relationships are evident and pupils value the work of others. They listen carefully to each other and offer sensible suggestions for improvements. However, at the moment, pupils' work is not recorded regularly enough for pupils to be able to revisit and further improve their compositions.
- There is good instrumental teaching and pupils value the many opportunities to perform in assemblies and school concerts. Presently there are only a small number involved in instrumental lessons, but the school is planning for pupils to learn instruments together as a whole class.

Quality of the music curriculum and extra-curricular provision

The quality of the curriculum and extra-curricular provision is outstanding.

- Pupils receive a regular weekly lesson taught by a specialist. Classes are divided into small groups so all can benefit from more individual attention. They also enjoy music through other areas of the curriculum and regular singing sessions each week. The curriculum is very broad and includes opportunities for pupils to use computers. This gives pupils other sound sources to explore and different ways to notate their compositions.
- Lessons are taught in the school hall which gives ample areas for pupils to work in small groups. Resources are excellent and reflect a wide variety of musical styles and cultures.
- Despite the small numbers of pupils involved in instrumental lessons, there are many opportunities for them to perform. Regular workshops and whole school events, involving all pupils, are held to celebrate a range of festivals.

Leadership and management of music

The leadership and management of music are outstanding.

- You and your governing body believe that music should have a high priority within the school. This support combined with the enthusiasm and skill of the co-ordinator means that music permeates most parts of the school. All teachers contribute to pupils' musical development and appreciate the effective guidance and advice provided by the music co-ordinator.
- Very careful planning and monitoring ensures that all aspects of the music provision are co-ordinated effectively. However there is recognition of the need to refine further the current assessment system to provide a more detailed picture of pupils' progress in the different musical skills.

Subject issues

Data Collection

- The school collects data but using it is at an early stage of development.

Partnership Links

- Very good links are made with Blackburn music service which provides some specialist instrumental teachers, workshops and involves pupils in local musical festivals. There are very good opportunities for some pupils to perform in various venues.

- Good links are developing with the local community.

Inclusion

- All pupils are included in class lessons and the school supports any pupil wanting to learn a musical instrument. The regular whole class activities and workshops enable all groups of pupils to experience and to be involved in different types of music.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- further developing and refining the use of assessment to clearly identify individual pupils' strengths and areas for development
- incorporating more regular recording of the pupils' compositions into the scheme of 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