

Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404040  
F 020 7421 6855  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



23 January 2008

Mr A Kilpatrick  
Northumberland Park Community School  
Trulock Road  
Tottenham  
London  
N17 0PG

Dear Mr Kilpatrick

### Ofsted Subject Inspection Programme – Music

Thank you for your assistance and hospitality, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 21-22 January 2008. 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: discussions with members of staff, pupils and a representative of a linked school, scrutiny of relevant documentation and the observation of lessons.

The overall effectiveness of music is satisfactory. The department has very recently lost its subject leader and the remaining teachers in the department are relatively new to teaching. While the school recognises that there are areas that require development, the music staff have developed good working relationships with pupils and created a positive ethos for learning.

## Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are satisfactory.

- On entry to the school, pupils' attainment in music is below national expectations. Pupils make satisfactory progress during Key Stage 3, although standards attained by many remain below expectations. While many pupils have limited skills in playing instruments they perform simple pieces accurately. Some performances are expressive and communicate a sense of style, but in many cases not enough emphasis is given to how music can communicate different feelings and moods. Pupils make satisfactory use of their performing skills to improvise and compose short pieces, both individually and in small groups.
- Results in the BTEC course in Key Stage 4 have been high in recent years. Current pupils in Year 11 are on track to achieve similar results. They use music software effectively and have good knowledge and understanding in a range of topics such as recording studio techniques. The course has successfully engaged and focused some pupils who might otherwise have lacked motivation in their studies.
- Most pupils have positive attitudes to their learning in music and collaborate well with their teachers. They concentrate well and enjoy what they are doing. A few pupils lose focus and concentration, for example when they complete work quickly and are not clear what to do next.

## Quality of teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

- Relationships between teachers and pupils are good. As a result, there is a positive ethos for learning.
- Teaching activities are generally well sequenced. In most cases there is good emphasis on active music making. Sometimes, however, explanations, including those related to musical notation, take too long. Insufficient emphasis is therefore given to pupils' aural and musical development.
- Pupils know, in general terms, what they are aiming for in lessons. However, learning objectives are not always precise enough to allow pupils to evaluate their own progress during lessons.
- Teachers and pupils assess work using criteria that are often, but not always, drawn from National Curriculum levels. Insufficient emphasis is given to the significance of the key characteristic of learning in the first sentence of each level. There is also a lack of clarity about progression within and between the levels.

## Quality of the music curriculum and extra-curricular provision

The overall quality of the curriculum is satisfactory.

- The good variety of musical styles included in Key Stage 3 engages and motivates pupils and is relevant to their musical interests.
- The curriculum is also well matched to the needs of most pupils. In lessons, teachers provide additional support for lower attaining pupils and extension work for more able pupils. However, information about pupils' achievements and interests, including those outside the classroom, is not always gathered strategically and then used to match the curriculum to the needs of all pupils.
- Specialist music computer programmes are used to support learning, although not all classes in Key Stage 3 have access to this facility.
- Some pupils take part in activities outside the classroom which they organise themselves. Opportunities for instrumental lessons and organised extra-curricular activities are too limited as there is insufficient opportunity for all pupils to develop their musical interests and aptitudes. The school has rightly identified this as an area for development.

## Leadership and management of music

The leadership and management of music are satisfactory.

- The school has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in music. There is a clear understanding and vision of how the subject needs to be developed.
- The current staffing position, where the school is without an experienced subject leader, is placing significant demands on the existing, relatively inexperienced, staff. It is to their credit that the current provision for music is satisfactory.
- However there is an urgent need to address areas of relative weakness in provision. These include ensuring that the planning and delivery of the curriculum focuses on aural and musical development; increasing the provision of extra-curricular activities; providing professional development and support for the staff and strengthening links with other providers.

## Subject issue: Partnership Links

- The school is making good progress in developing the quality of its music links with other schools, partly as a result of its specialist Arts status. The Special School which shares the school site is appreciative of the opportunities provided to enhance the music curriculum for its students.
- An imaginative collaborative development of the Tottenham Music and Dance Centre, which is at an early stage of development, has the potential to provide a valuable resource for the school and the wider community.
- The department has used informal links with outside organisations to enhance its provision for pupils in Key Stage 4. Overall, however, links

with others, including the local authority music service and other community and professional musicians, are under-developed.

## Inclusion

- The department aims to be an inclusive department where all pupils are valued. As a result the classroom curriculum provides well for the needs of the significant majority of pupils, although the absence of activities beyond this limits opportunities for pupils to be involved in a range of activities suited to their needs and interests.
- Data on pupils' attainment is collected and recorded regularly. Attainment on entry is measured through a unit which provides helpful information on some, but not all, aspects of pupils' National Curriculum experiences in music. On-going record keeping is detailed but is not always sufficiently well linked to national curriculum requirements and is not used systematically to inform curriculum planning.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- ensuring that learning objectives for lessons are clear and simple, and related to National Curriculum expectations
- making better use of National Curriculum levels when assessing pupils' attainment
- providing a range of extra-curricular activities and increasing the variety of instrumental lessons
- further developing partnerships with others in order to enhance provision for pupils and to provide professional development for staff.

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

David Williams  
Additional Inspector