

Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE

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



11 February 2008

Mr S Poole  
Headteacher  
Hinchley Wood School  
Claygate Lane  
Hinchley Wood  
Esher  
Surrey  
KT10 0AQ

Dear Mr Poole

### Ofsted Subject Inspection Programme – Music

Thank you for your assistance and hospitality, and that of your staff and students, during my visit on 04-05 February 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 student 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, students and key partners, scrutiny of relevant documentation and observation of lessons and extra-curricular activities.

The overall effectiveness of music is outstanding. Standards are high and many students make excellent progress as a result of high quality teaching. Large numbers of students take part in the excellent range of opportunities which the school provides both within and beyond the classroom. The progress made by the school in developing its provision and involving students demonstrates outstanding capacity for improvement.

## Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are outstanding.

- Standards in lessons are high. Students make consistently good progress and many make outstanding progress. Their attitudes are positive and they respond very maturely. They collaborate well and support each other in a friendly and constructive way.
- By the end of Key Stage 3, students have developed good skills as composers and performers. They make effective use of the knowledge and understanding they gain from listening to music to help them in their own music making.
- The proportion of students who continue with their music studies after Key Stage 3 is well above the national average. Almost a quarter of students in Key Stage 4 and a third of those in the sixth form study a music course at GCSE or Advanced level. Standards are high and students make very good progress. Two thirds of the cohort who entered the GCSE examination in 2007 were boys. They achieved especially well and better in music than in their other subjects.
- A quarter of all students is involved in extra-curricular activities and instrumental lessons. The proportion is higher in younger age groups, but there is a good level of involvement throughout the school. Standards in extra-curricular activities are good and are particularly high in the Hinchley Wood Singers, a chamber choir, and the jazz band.

## Quality of teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is outstanding.

- Relationships between students and staff are excellent. Staff support all students well. Extension opportunities are provided for more able students and work is carefully matched to the needs of the least able.
- Teachers use their outstanding subject knowledge to help students to improve the quality of their work. For example, vocal demonstrations in a choir rehearsal helped students to improve their singing and the helpful use of assessment criteria in lessons helped students to know how to improve their own work.
- Strategies for assessment are well-thought out and act as an effective way of measuring students' progress and identifying areas for further development.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) is used effectively to enhance students' experiences. In Year 9, for example, a unit on popular music enables students to use a sequencing package to re-construct a piece which they have analysed aurally. Older students use sequencing and score writing programmes very effectively.

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

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

- The curriculum, which is balanced and imaginative, meets the needs of all students. The school is developing an innovative approach to the curriculum. For example, 'Thinking Smart', a competency based curriculum in Year 7, links studies in music with those in English, drama and art. The school identified the need for, and subsequently introduced, Music Technology to complement its provision of music at advanced level in the sixth form.
- Some students, including some at risk of becoming disaffected, are involved in accredited courses such as the 'Young People's Arts Award' scheme developed by Arts Council England and Trinity Guildhall. This enables them to develop skills in DJing and relates the activities to real contexts. The school has rightly identified the need to extend further the range of accredited courses it offers.
- The school offers a varied and extensive range of extra-curricular activities, many of which are open to all students. In addition to choirs, orchestras and a range of bands there are opportunities for students to be involved in DJing, music technology, rock music and music from other cultures such as South America. While a good number of students learn an instrument, the school has identified that it needs to encourage more pupils to learn stringed instruments.
- The school's specialist status has had a significant impact on the curriculum, both within music and more broadly. For example, cross-curricular projects, such as one involving music and mathematics, have helped to develop positive attitudes towards learning in mathematics.

## Leadership and management of music

The leadership and management of music are outstanding.

- The school's vision for music is clearly articulated. There is a strong sense of purpose and focus on enabling all students to achieve well.
- The school has made significant progress since gaining specialist status. It has raised standards, developed the breadth of its provision and significantly increased the numbers involved in music. The department works effectively with partners, both within and beyond the school, to provide support and a range of good quality opportunities for students.
- The school has made very effective use of the funding resulting from specialist status to improve facilities and resources for music. They are now excellent. Teachers are very well supported by additional administrative and technical staff. This helps to ensure that the impact of music on the school as a whole is high.

- The school is not complacent and continues to seek further improvement. For example it is focusing on further improving its provision for students at risk of permanent exclusion or those who are unable to access the school's curriculum using the school's music provision.

#### Subject issue: Partnership Links

- The school has established many effective links with other schools and external agencies. These links have benefitted students in the school and in other schools. For example, pupils in a partner primary school have benefitted from the sharing of resources and expertise which is leading to increased opportunities and higher standards. The members of the Samba band have supported the musical development of students with learning difficulties and disabilities in a special school. A local charitable trust has supported the school through providing funding for a range of initiatives such as cross-curricular projects and a residency with a professional brass ensemble.

#### Inclusion

- The school is an inclusive school where good quality music provision, within and beyond the curriculum, is available to all pupils. A large proportion of students study music in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form. The school's analysis shows that good numbers of students from different groups are involved in extra-curricular activities.
- Data on pupils' attainment is collected and recorded regularly. This information is used very well to enable students to assess their own and each other's work. As a result they understand what they need to do to improve the quality of their work.

#### Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- collaborating with feeder schools to encourage more pupils to begin to learn orchestral stringed instruments and to encourage them to continue to learn after transfer
- establishing additional accreditation opportunities for students throughout the school.

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