

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404040
F 020 7421 6855
www.ofsted.gov.uk
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk



27 March 2009

Mr M Davidovic
Headteacher
Lawnswood School
Ring Road
West Park
Leeds
West Yorkshire
LS16 5AG

Dear Mr Davidovic

Ofsted Subject Inspection Programme – Music

Thank you for your assistance and hospitality and that of your staff and students, during my visit on the 23-24 February 2009. 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 any links you have developed with other schools and agencies.

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 representatives from university partners and the local music services, observations of lessons and extra-curricular activities, scrutiny of documentation and recordings of students' work.

The overall effectiveness of music is good. In 2008, students' results in music at GCSE level continued to be above average and better than their results in most other subjects. Good and sometimes outstanding teaching enables students to make good progress at all key stages. However, there is a lack of singing throughout the school. The subject leader demonstrates impressive enthusiasm for music which is appreciated by many students. The well above

average number of students who study music, especially in Years 10 and 11, are testament to the popularity of the subject.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in music are good.

- Standards at the end of Year 9 are broadly average and a few students attain above average standards. Overall, given students' below average attainment on entry to the school, all students make good progress. The school recognises that the standard of singing throughout the school is currently too low.
- Standards are above average at the end of Year 11. Nearly twice the average number of students study GCSE music. In 2008, students' results in music continued to be better than most other subjects.
- In 2008, standards at Advanced Level dipped to broadly average. However school data and inspection evidence for the current Year 13 students indicates that their progress is good and standards are set to rise to above average.
- An increasing number of students are involved in instrumental lessons and extra-curricular groups. The school is actively investigating ways how to encourage even more students to learn an instrument.

Quality of teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good.

- Students learn well and make good progress because teachers have high expectations of what students can do. Teachers' energy and enthusiasm for music is transmitted well to students.
- Generally there is a happy atmosphere in lessons, where strong working relationships, especially in the sixth form, enable students to have positive attitudes and want to do well. In the best lessons, learning is planned carefully, to meet the needs of all students; however there are occasions when this is not the case and this led to inappropriate behaviour which limited students' learning.
- A strong feature of teaching is the way students learn to make musical decisions by listening and predicting how sounds will fit together. This helps them to put different parts together musically.
- There is regular evaluation of the progress students make in lessons, audio recordings are made and students are expected to set themselves targets for future learning.

Quality of the music curriculum and extra-curricular provision

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

- Students' knowledge, skills and understanding of music are developed well as a result of the way progression is clearly indicated in the schemes of work. The curriculum in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form fulfils the syllabus requirements and also develops learning effectively from year to year. However, although singing is identified in the units of work, the school agrees that it does not feature sufficiently regularly in lessons. Students confirm that this is the case and indicate they would like to do more singing in lessons.
- Students welcome the increasing choice of extra-curricular groups and the regularity with which these groups now take place. Insufficient attention is given to providing trips to concerts and other music events in order to enrich and complement the curriculum studied in lessons. The school is actively considering ways to include more concerts and visits within the local area.

Leadership and management of music

The leadership and management of music are good.

- The subject leader demonstrates energy and determination to promote the best possible musical experiences for all students. He is well supported by other music staff. Together they make a strong team where individual strengths and musical expertise complement each other well. Appropriate training and support is provided for all music staff, including trainee teachers and those new to the profession.
- Senior leaders give good support and recognise the importance and value of music to the whole school. A good range of evidence is included in the department's self evaluation document. The school recognises, however, despite monitoring provision and collecting data, this data is not always used to best effect. For example, it is not always used to inform lesson planning and judge how well particular groups of students are doing and their involvement in music activities. This is especially true for students in Years 7 to 9.
- The subject leader is well aware of the national issues for music and how these will impact on practice. This is clearly demonstrated by the changes made to the Key Stage 3 curriculum. Partnerships with the local music services are strong with instrumental teachers fully involved in the music department and their students' learning. For example, understanding syllabus requirements thoroughly so that they can ensure their students are fully prepared for the performing part of their examination. Trainee teachers from local universities, work regularly in the music department where they contribute fully to musical events. As well as teaching some classes they work effectively with some students who struggle with aspects of music learning.

Inclusion

- All students are able to take part in GCSE music lessons and extra support is given through the mentoring programme, especially to those whose attendance is poor.
- The school collects information about students' musical interests and abilities but recognises that at present this information is not used fully, for example, to identify the progress and involvement of different groups of students.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- including singing regularly in classroom lessons
- making consistent and regular use of the analysis of data to identify the progress made by different groups of students and their involvement in music activities
- providing more opportunities to enable students to attend concerts and music events out of school in order to enrich the music curriculum taught in lessons.

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

