

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



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Mr P Martin  
Headteacher  
Waddington All Saints Primary School  
Mere Road  
Waddington  
Lincoln  
Lincolnshire  
LN5 9NX

Dear Mr Martin

### Ofsted Subject Inspection Programme – Music

Thank you for your assistance and hospitality, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 16 March 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 pupil is benefiting from your music provision. It also explored the 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 and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation and observation of lessons, extra-curricular activities and two assemblies.

The overall effectiveness of music is satisfactory with many good features. There is a strong commitment to music which is being developed both as an important aspect and an integral part of the whole curriculum. Most impressive is the way that pupils are increasingly being involved in their learning through helping to define success criteria.

#### Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in music are satisfactory overall with a particular strength in the quality of singing.

- Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage. They enjoy exploring sounds and can quickly and confidently name, select and group instruments.

They identify and describe how sounds can be changed and show good control when using instruments.

- Progress is also secure in Key Stage 1 where pupils work well together in groups creating their own sequence of sounds to stories. They make good use of the symbols they have invented and are starting to explore how sounds can be combined. Standards by the end of Key Stage 1 are broadly in line with expectations.
- Progress in Key Stage 2 is more mixed but satisfactory overall. While there is some good work by individual pupils who achieve above expectations, other pupils need more support to achieve as well as they could.
- Pupils sing well in the singing assemblies and in the school choirs. The way the pupils started to sing on their own without direction from the subject leader was particularly impressive.

### Quality of teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory with strong features such as the way pupils are involved in their learning.

- Tasks are managed well and there is good pace to lessons. Pupils were rightfully appreciative of the way teachers give them praise and encouragement.
- Teachers enjoy teaching music and make good use of effective generic teaching strategies. Most effective is the way pupils are involved in assessing their own work, contributing to the development of shared success criteria and recording their work using video. In the best practice, these success criteria are accumulative and progressive so that pupils know what to do to improve their work. However, the success criteria generally do not give enough detail about the quality of response expected.
- Music is beginning to be incorporated well into other lessons, for example links were made between music and poetry and music and dance. The best links were where pupils were helped to develop their musical understanding such as in the dance lesson where pupils created movement motifs to extended musical phrases. Less effective links were when opportunities were missed to increase the quality of the musical response by placing too much emphasis on verbal responses.

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

The quality of the curriculum and extra-curricular provision is satisfactory with particularly good development of assessment procedures.

- The curriculum is planned well to ensure breadth and coverage of requirements. In the most effective lessons, these plans are carefully adapted to meet the musical needs of the pupils. The school is aware of the need to ensure this occurs in all lessons.
- Good attention is given to enabling pupils' musical development through music lessons in addition to the links being made with other subjects. The school is aware of the need to ensure all classes have similar opportunities in music.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) is increasingly being used to support pupils' musical development.
- Assessment procedures are good and are used confidently by teachers and pupils. The school is well placed to further refine these assessment criteria to

provide increasing challenge through linking them to clear steps of progression as shown, for example, in the first sentence in each of the National Curriculum levels.

## Leadership and management of music

The leadership and management of music are satisfactory with good features such as the way music is being planned as part of the whole curriculum.

- You have a clear vision for music as an important part of the school curriculum and an extremely accurate view of the music provision. Effective systems have been put in place such as the way pupils are involved in their learning and this is starting to have a marked impact on the progress pupils are making in music.
- The development of linked age related and areas of learning planning teams is particularly interesting as this is enabling the development of increasingly effective links between music and other subjects whilst ensuring good ongoing development of music through focussed music sessions.
- There is a clear role for the music leader within these teams who is supported well by colleagues. All documentation is clearly presented and organised effectively. The increasing use of video recording provides an excellent means by which the school can share and evaluate music work together, thus increasing consistency and raising expectations.
- Good links have been developed with a local secondary school which is helping to extend provision for example, in the use of ICT.

Subject issue:

## Inclusion

- All pupils feel involved in music and enjoy the range of opportunities provided. The school is aware of the need to find ways to involve more boys in extra-curricular activities.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- refining the success criteria to ensure pupils are always challenged to improve the quality of their musical responses
- continuing to develop effective links with other subjects by ensuring the experiences deepen pupils' musical understanding
- ensuring pupils are given enough opportunities to develop and demonstrate their musical understanding through non-verbal responses.

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

Anthony Knight  
Her Majesty's Inspector