

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

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



14 July 2009

Mr P McNicholas
Headteacher
St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School
Anne's Crescent
Ashby
Scunthorpe
DN16 2LW

Dear Mr McNicholas

Ofsted Subject Inspection Programme – Music

Thank you for your assistance and hospitality and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on the 25 June 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 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: observation of lessons and an assembly, scrutiny of relevant documentation and pupils' work. Discussions were also held with members of staff and pupils.

As we discussed during the inspection and in the feedback meeting, whilst recognising there are strengths, especially in the regular productions, the performances with other schools and the growing musical links with the primary school in Dalian, China, the overall effectiveness of music is inadequate. This is because of serious shortcomings in the planning of lessons and the quality of teaching.

These were the main points noted during the visit:

Achievement and standards

- Children start school with musical abilities generally below that expected for their age. They enjoy singing songs and musical games. However, because activities are not matched appropriately to pupils' capabilities in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, pupils overall, make inadequate progress by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils enjoy the opportunities provided by the school to take part in concerts and annual nativity plays. This helps to develop their performing skills and self-confidence.

Quality of teaching and learning

- Pupils behave well, respond promptly to instructions and are keen to be involved in lessons.
- However, because lessons are insufficiently demanding, pupils do not make the expected progress. Musical facts and activities are taught in isolation which makes it difficult for pupils to make connections between different aspects of music learning. There is too much teacher-led, whole-class teaching where pupils are given little opportunity to contribute or to express their ideas and opinions.

Quality of the music curriculum and extra-curricular provision

- The scheme of work requires significant improvement to ensure that it meets the needs and interests of all pupils. Greater clarity of what pupils are to learn and more challenge is needed to raise standards and eradicate underachievement.
- There are successful annual concerts which help pupils to explore music from different times and cultures.

Leadership and management of music

- The school is aware that monitoring of overall provision has not been rigorous enough to identify weaknesses in provision. Changes and developments in music education have not been fully embraced. Too much emphasis is placed on extra-curricular activities and not enough attention is given to improving whole-class teaching and learning through the curriculum.
- The school makes good use of its strong links with the Parish, local community and their partner school in China. Discussions are taking place with the link school for a music teacher from China to visit and work in St. Bernadette's in the next academic year.

Inclusion

- While the school has good knowledge of the pupils who play in the school productions, insufficient use is made of pupils' outside musical interests and experiences when planning lessons.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- providing a curriculum that meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and indicates how pupils' musical skills are to be developed in all aspects of music learning
- ensuring that all pupils are challenged appropriately and that they understand what they are to learn in lessons and how to improve their work
- monitoring provision closely and seeking external support if necessary.

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