

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

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



23 October 2009

Mr S Mason
Headteacher
The Honeywood Community Science School
Westfield Drive
Coggeshall
Colchester
Essex
CO6 1PZ

Dear Mr Mason

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Music

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 6 and 7 October 2009, to look at work in music.

As outlined in the initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the subject, the visit had a particular focus on the extent to which all students are benefiting from the provision. I also explored the partnerships you may have developed with other schools and agencies to improve continuity and increase opportunity for your students.

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. 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 interviews with staff and students, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of students' work, observation of five lessons and recordings of public performances.

The overall effectiveness of music was judged to be good. Students enjoy musical activities and are making good progress in their learning as a result of good quality teaching. The school has a clear vision for the further development of its provision.

Achievement in music

Achievement in music is good.

- When they join the school in Year 7, most students are attaining below the national expectations for music. They make good progress during Key Stage 3 and by the end of Year 9 almost all meet the national expectations for music. The proportion of students at this level has increased significantly over the last four years.
- Results in GCSE examinations over recent years have been below average. Students in Key Stage 4 are now making good progress to attain in line with national averages. School monitoring information indicates that almost all students in Year 11 are making good progress towards their targets and will earn higher grades at GCSE.
- A good proportion of students receive instrumental or vocal lessons, either in school or privately. Many are involved in one or more extra-curricular activities where they achieve well.
- Students have very positive attitudes to their music making and respond in a mature way. They collaborate very well in group and whole-class activities and support each other in a friendly and constructive manner. Music prefects and coordinators play a key role in leading and supporting the musical activities in the school.

Quality of teaching of music

The quality of teaching of music is good.

- Teaching is lively and engaging. Very positive relationships and teachers' strong subject knowledge help students to be effective learners and make good progress. They are actively engaged in well-sequenced practical music activities where they learn through first-hand experience. In a small minority of cases too great an emphasis is given to verbal explanations at the expense of musical demonstrations.
- Lessons are purposeful and have a clear focus. As a result, students almost always understand what they are to learn. On a few occasions, however, planning is based on what activities students are expected to complete, rather than what they are expected to learn.
- Good feedback is provided to help students improve the quality of their work.

Quality of the curriculum in music

The quality of the curriculum in music is satisfactory.

- The class-based curriculum is well-balanced and includes a wide range of musical styles and genres which students enjoy. The department is re-writing schemes of work in response to recent national developments. This process has rightly been identified as a priority.

- The provision of specialist information and communication technology (ICT) resources for music does not allow sufficient access for all students. Again, the school has recognised this and is already beginning to address the issue.
- The curriculum is enhanced well through a good range of instrumental lessons, extra-curricular activities, whole-school events and other activities. The department has identified the need to extend the musical breadth of its extra-curricular activities to provide more opportunities for students who are not currently involved.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in music

The effectiveness of leadership and management in music is good.

- The school's vision for music is clear. It is rooted in reflective practice which recognises the need for an inclusive approach towards musical opportunities. The school is now taking action to provide these opportunities.
- The department's self-evaluation identifies key priorities for development very effectively. For example, the focus on raising attainment through improving the quality of teaching is having a positive impact on achievement in music.
- The subject leader is working effectively to improve provision and raise standards. Curriculum planning is being thoughtfully developed in response to national requirements and initiatives.

Subject issue – Inclusion

- The school's aim that music should be accessible to all students is being met in many ways. All students in Key Stage 3 have equal and appropriate access to music within the curriculum with a high proportion of those with special educational needs and/or disabilities being involved in instrumental lessons and extra-curricular activities. Those studying music for GCSE receive instrumental tuition, which is fully funded by the school. The school provides a good range of opportunities for music making but recognises that there is scope to involve more students.

Subject issue – Partnerships

- The school makes effective use of links with the local authority music service, which provides most of the instrumental teaching at the school. Some of the instrumental teachers also lead ensembles and provide support for students studying music for GCSE.

- The school has supported the development of music in feeder schools, showing good awareness of the important role that subject expertise can play in supporting the development of music for pupils in these schools. It has also established good links with community groups.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- ensuring that all teaching is of the highest quality by consistently:
 - identifying clearly and precisely what students are to learn as well as do in lessons
 - placing greater emphasis on musical illustration and demonstration rather than verbal explanation
- clarifying and extending the curriculum by:
 - completing the development of schemes of work
 - improving resources for ICT
 - widening the range of extra-curricular activities.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop music in the school.

As was explained in a previous letter, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be published on the Ofsted website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

David Williams
Additional Inspector