

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



18 March 2010

Mr T Eldridge
Acting Headteacher
King Egbert School
Totley Brook Road
Sheffield
S17 3QU

Dear Mr Eldridge

Ofsted 2009-10 subject survey inspection programme: music

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and students, during my visit on 1 and 2 March 2010 to look at work in music.

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 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.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included: interviews with staff; observations of peripatetic lessons and extra-curricular activities; talking to selected students; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of students' work; and visits to three lessons.

The overall effectiveness of music is satisfactory. There are strengths in the benefits older students gain from taking part in music clubs and ensembles. Good progress is made by students in some lessons. In other lessons, however, students are not always engaged sufficiently in appropriate musical activities to enable them to make as much progress as they should.

Achievement in music

Achievement in music is satisfactory.

- Given their varied starting points, students make broadly satisfactory progress in Key Stage 3. Progress is not better because there is inconsistency in students' musical development across the full range of musical experiences. They make better progress in performing than they do in singing and composing work.

- A broadly average proportion of students took GCSE music in 2009 attaining above average standards. These students made good progress. Previous years' results were disappointing and these grades demonstrate a pleasing improvement.
- Overall participation rates in additional instrumental tuition and in the range of extra-curricular activities are satisfactory. Those who take part enjoy opportunities to perform and they make good use of the recording and electronic equipment to enhance their work. Senior students display a keen understanding of and a good willingness to engage positively with different musical styles and traditions which they use well in their studies.
- A very small number of students took A-level music in 2009 and all attained the grades expected of them. A similar number of students, currently in Year 12, study music and are making satisfactory progress.

Quality of teaching in music

The quality of teaching in music is satisfactory.

- The best teaching, which is good, is characterised by a lively and focused approach involving students in a range of well-sequenced musical activities. In these cases, students know what they are intended to achieve and engage positively in their learning. They learn from their mistakes, making effective use of the criteria for assessment and audio recordings, to check what they need to do to improve their work.
- In the less effective lessons, students spend too long listening to verbal instructions, copying information and completing worksheets. These non-musical activities detract from students' understanding of what they are to learn in lessons. Assessments in these lessons focus mainly on increasing students' technical or theoretical skills rather than improving their all-round musical skills.

Quality of the curriculum in music

The quality of the curriculum in music is satisfactory.

- The Key Stage 3 curriculum provides a variety of topics and is currently being revised to better meet students' interests and needs. However, some aspects are given a narrow focus paying most attention to developing students' theoretical and performing skills. Although information and communication technology (ICT) is used regularly, the school recognises that the choice of material is rather limited.
- Outline schemes of work and the awarding bodies' published materials are used to identify coursework requirements for examination courses. There is, however, insufficient detail about musical progression within and across both Key Stages 4 and 5.
- There is a reasonable range of extra-curricular activities but the short lunch break means that these activities have to take place after school. Understandably, committed students are involved in activities across different subjects and at times find it tricky to balance attendance at the

different events. This does not make it easy for them to make consistent progress.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in music

The effectiveness of the leadership and management in music is satisfactory.

- The department runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. Examination students particularly appreciate the extra teaching given to them out of lesson time.
- A recent review of the subject correctly identifies the key areas for future development but currently presents an overgenerous opinion regarding the overall quality of provision and student outcomes. However, the head of department has good ideas, such as providing a more effective baseline assessment when students start in Year 7 together with improvements for examination candidates following helpful feedback from external markers.
- The school recognises that past monitoring has not ensured sufficient consistency in the quality of teaching for all students to make the progress of which they are capable. However, appropriate continuing professional development is enabling the head of department to undertake an effective review and be more proactive when tackling issues.

Subject issue: inclusion

- Analysis indicates that a similar number of boys and girls are involved in extra-curricular activities. However, more boys than girls receive instrumental tuition with a reverse proportion studying examination courses. At the same time, however, noticeably fewer students with special educational needs and/or disabilities and from minority ethnic groups participate in music activities.
- Information about students' interests and previous involvement in music making is identified when they enter the school in Year 7. However, at present, this information mainly indicates their instrumental ability.

Subject issue: partnerships

- The school's links with instrumental teachers are good and enable some students to take part in music events with other students in the local authority, for example.
- However, the school recognises that links with feeder primary schools are currently underdeveloped. Active consideration is being given to develop appropriate associations.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- taking rapid action to increase the consistency of teaching so that all students make more musical progress by:
 - placing more emphasis in lessons on developing students' musical understanding rather than completing activities,

reducing the time spent on verbal presentations and non-musical tasks

- making better use of audio recording so that students understand how to improve their work

- defining clearly within the schemes of work the full and required range of musical styles and conventions, including singing and a wider choice of ICT resources
- building on the existing extra-curricular programme to involve a wider range of students.

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

As I explained previously, 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

Marianne Young
Her Majesty's Inspector