

Aviation House  
125 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231  
F 020 7421 6855  
[enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



15 June 2010

Mrs A Henderson  
Headteacher  
Farringdon Primary School  
Archer Road  
Farringdon  
Sunderland  
SR3 3DJ

Dear Mrs Henderson

Ofsted 2010-11 subject survey inspection programme: music

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and pupils, during my visit on 25 and 26 May 2010 to look at work in music.

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 and selected pupils; a meeting with a member of the governing body and the local authority music consultant; scrutiny of relevant documentation; visits to seven lessons; and observations of instrumental lessons and extra-curricular activities.

The overall effectiveness of music is satisfactory. Music is important to the school and good enthusiasm is shown by those involved in leading and managing the subject. Good partnerships enable pupils to be involved in different music activities which they value highly, for example, all pupils in Year 4 enjoy learning the Chalumeau. The school holds the Artsmark Gold award. However, inconsistencies in teaching mean that not all pupils are challenged to make as much progress as they could.

Achievement in music

Achievement in music is satisfactory.

- When children join the school, they have limited experience of singing and using instruments. The variety of music activities in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good; school data and observations confirm that these help children to make good progress.

- Although all aspects of music learning are generally covered from Years 1 to 6, the school acknowledges that composing work has much less emphasis than performing and listening. This unevenness of coverage, and the inconsistencies in the quality of teaching across the school, result in pupils attaining below average standards overall. However, in relation to their starting points this represents satisfactory progress by the end of Key Stage 2.
- An increasing number of pupils are involved in extra-curricular activities and instrumental lessons. The school recognises that boys are underrepresented in the choir. However, their interest and enjoyment are evident in the street dance group. All pupils are able to perform to different audiences and this, together with developing their cooperation and social interaction, ensures that their personal development is good.

### Quality of teaching in music

The quality of teaching in music is satisfactory.

- In the best lessons, teaching has a clear, simple focus on the musical progress pupils are to make, with challenge well matched to the needs of individual pupils. Musical skills are developed systematically through a good range of music activities. Pupils are encouraged to explain and demonstrate their understanding musically.
- However, these features are not consistent across the school. Too often, pupils' creativity and their individual musical responses are restricted because lesson activities are not always matched to pupils' needs or are over-directed by teachers. Some teachers lack confidence in their subject knowledge.
- Although assessment is used successfully in the Early Years Foundation Stage to check how well children are doing, it is not yet replicated throughout the school. Currently, teachers mainly check whether pupils have completed an activity. Insufficient use is made of audio recordings so that pupils can listen to and improve their compositions.

### Quality of the curriculum in music

The quality of the curriculum in music is satisfactory.

- The school has developed a creative, thematic approach to curriculum planning, incorporating learning across a range of subjects. Evidence suggests that this approach has helped to improve pupils' general achievement, and particularly their personal development. However, planning does not always give a clear focus to music learning, particularly the musical skills and understanding that pupils are to develop through this thematic approach.
- Class music activities are complemented by whole-school opportunities and strong partnerships have been established, especially with the secondary school to which most pupils progress. This enables Year 6 pupils to be successfully involved in transition work using information and

communication technology in music, an aspect which the school is unable to provide at present.

## Effectiveness of leadership and management in music

The effectiveness of leadership and management in music is good.

- All those involved in leading and managing music bring much enthusiasm to their roles. They value the subject and recognise, rightly, that music is important to the development of the whole child. As a result, they ensure that any barriers which prevent pupils from participating in productions, concerts and instrumental lessons are removed.
- You are rightly proud of the strong links you have made with other schools and professional artists, and the benefits that these links have brought to securing pupils' improved outcomes, their personal development and community cohesion.
- Through careful monitoring and a good development plan for music, you have identified the strengths and weaknesses of current provision and the need to develop some areas, such as the overall quality of teaching, further. Appropriate training has been delivered and more is planned, especially that linked to national music initiatives. These features demonstrate a good capacity for improvement.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- making sure that composition work has a similar emphasis as other aspects of the music curriculum in lessons
- ensuring that pupils make good or better musical progress by:
  - using assessment information to plan more challenging lessons that take better account of pupils' prior musical skills and understanding
  - using audio recordings regularly to help pupils evaluate their work and understand what they can do to make their music even better.

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 under the URN for your school. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Marianne Young  
Her Majesty's Inspector