

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)



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Mrs J Cook  
Headteacher  
High Hurstwood CE Primary School  
Chillies Lane  
Uckfield  
East Sussex  
TN22 4AD

Dear Mrs Cook

### **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 21 June 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 without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included: interviews with staff and pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of three lessons, an assembly and a choir rehearsal.

The overall effectiveness of music is good.

#### **Achievement in music**

Achievement in music is good.

- Pupils make good progress in music. By the end of Year 6, standards in singing are above average while standards in playing instruments and in creating music are broadly average. The school has a well-established tradition in singing where the involvement of boys is a notable feature. Opportunities for pupils to compose have increased recently and, although standards remain broadly average, pupils are now making good progress. Pupils in Year 6, for example, created sounds and rhythmic patterns which they combined and sequenced to depict the changing speeds and sounds in an imaginary train journey. When evaluating the piece, the pupils correctly identified how they could improve their work.

- Many pupils take part in musical activities beyond the classroom. Good numbers are involved in the school choir and all pupils take part in the bi-annual performance of a musical show.
- Pupils' personal development in music is good. They cooperate willingly with each other, concentrate well and enjoy their music-making.

### **Quality of teaching in music**

The quality of teaching in music is good.

- Positive working relationships between teachers and pupils play a key part in engaging pupils positively and actively in their learning. Teaching rightly ensures pupils' first-hand involvement in music-making through the use of the voice and other resources, such as tuned and untuned percussion instruments.
- Lessons have a clear musical focus, although lesson planning does not always identify sufficiently precisely the musical skills, knowledge and understanding that pupils are intended to learn. Teachers use ongoing assessment well to help pupils to improve their work, monitor progress and keep good records of how well they are doing.
- The school is aware that recent improvements to the school buildings and resources will allow more extensive use of information and communication technology (ICT), including regular recording of pupils' music-making, to help pupils listen to and evaluate their work.

### **Quality of the curriculum in music**

The quality of the curriculum in music is satisfactory.

- The school has made good progress in broadening the music curriculum by beginning to increase the emphasis on the use of instruments and composing, while maintaining its good focus on singing. Pupils recognise these developments and say that they enjoy the broader approach to their music-making. The scheme of work, which is in the process of being revised, draws ideas and activities from a range of sources and presents a clear outline of what is to be taught. As yet, however, it does not differentiate between what might be expected for pupils of different ages, who are taught together in mixed classes.
- Opportunities for pupils to extend their interests and expertise focus strongly on singing where all pupils are involved. In addition, a satisfactory proportion receives instrumental lessons. The school recognises the potential to broaden its extra-curricular activities by providing instrumental ensembles, such as samba or drumming bands, which could involve pupils, regardless of their musical skills or previous involvement.

### **Effectiveness of leadership and management in music**

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

- The school has a clear vision for music, which is based on an accurate self-evaluation of its strengths and areas for development. It is, for example, building on its tradition and high standards in singing by providing worthwhile opportunities for pupils to compose and use musical instruments in the classroom.
- The inclusion in extra-curricular activities of pupils from different groups within the school is good. The school has effective partnerships with external organisations, including the local authority music service, the local community and a cluster group of small schools, all of which extend the range of opportunities for music-making. The school is aware, however, of the need to ensure that the range of extra-curricular activities offered allows pupils with different interests to be involved.

**Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:**

- clarifying what pupils in different year groups are expected to achieve by
  - continuing to develop the scheme of work, defining how activities and expectations will be differentiated
  - using the expectations in the scheme of work as a basis to identify clearly and precisely what pupils are intended to learn in lessons
- providing more opportunities for pupils with different interests and musical experiences to be involved in a wider range of extra-curricular activities.

I hope that 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

**David Williams**  
**Additional Inspector**