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Mr David Matthews  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Matthews

Ofsted subject inspection programme – citizenship and music

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my joint visit with David Williams on 16 and 17 October 2006 to look at work in citizenship and 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. 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 pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of lessons.

## Citizenship

The overall effectiveness of citizenship was judged to be satisfactory. There are examples of good practice in the delivery of the subject but aspects of leadership and management and assessment procedures are underdeveloped.

## Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in citizenship are satisfactory overall.

- Pupils demonstrate good knowledge of the aspects of the citizenship curriculum that are delivered through immersion days. The work produced as a result of the Year 8 multicultural day and the pupils' reflections demonstrate a good level of achievement.
- Pupils' skills in participating in active citizenship are good although the opportunities provided are not always an entitlement for all.

### Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

- Lessons make good use of topical issues to stimulate debate and discussion.
- Relationships between pupils and teachers are good. Pupils are keen to share their opinions and contribute to discussion although low level disruption from a minority of pupils can affect the pace of learning.
- Active learning strategies are used constructively to allow pupils to plan and evaluate their own learning. The work completed by year 11 pupils during the development day provided excellent opportunities for reflection.
- Assessment is underdeveloped. Procedures do not enable teachers and pupils to assess progress in citizenship or to identify targets for improvement throughout the key stages.

### Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is inadequate as insufficient time is allocated to the delivery of citizenship.

- Citizenship is delivered through immersion days which are well planned and set clear citizenship objectives. They enable pupils to achieve well in specific aspects of the curriculum but the time allocated to these is insufficient to ensure adequate coverage.
- There are opportunities to deliver citizenship through other curriculum subjects but not as part of a coherent and progressive programme with clear linkage between the three strands. Elements of the citizenship curriculum are also delivered through activities like enterprise week and international day but this coverage is incidental.

### Leadership and management of citizenship

Leadership and management are very good at subject level.

- The development of the subject is led by a committed co-ordinator who is working well within the constraints of the model of delivery. The immersion days are very well managed and use the subject expertise and skills of staff in a constructive way to promote achievement.
- Subject development is hindered by the lack of a detailed action plan reflecting a whole school approach to citizenship matched to a long term strategic development plan.
- Time and resources have not been allocated for appropriate training to show staff how to teach citizenship effectively through their subjects.
- Monitoring and evaluation of the standards and quality of the citizenship curriculum is underdeveloped.

## Inclusion

The school has an inclusive ethos that values and celebrates diversity. Pupils are keen to offer their views and positively upholding citizenship values. They understand the diverse school community and are tolerant of each other.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- to develop the assessment of citizenship
- to allocate sufficient time and resources to the delivery of citizenship
- to ensure staff have access to citizenship training
- to monitor and evaluate standards and the quality of citizenship teaching.

## Music

The overall effectiveness of music was judged to be good.

### Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in music are good overall.

- In Key Stage 3, standards are above average and pupils make good progress. Pupils have well developed listening skills. They work effectively in groups, building on their knowledge to plan and create successful compositions. Their written evaluations help them to identify areas for improvement.
- In Key Stage 4, standards are well above average and pupils make very good progress. Large numbers study music at GCSE and results have been consistently well above national averages in recent years. Pupils talk confidently and knowledgeably about their fluent and imaginative compositions.

- Pupils enjoy music and display very positive attitudes to their learning. A large proportion of pupils enjoy taking part in the school's co-curriculum (extra-curricular activities). They attain high standards and make very good progress.

### Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

- Teaching is carefully matched to the needs, aptitudes and interests of pupils. It successfully involves all pupils and enables them to make good progress. The use of the listening diary to enable pupils to develop their listening skills is a particularly effective strategy, although the music chosen does not always link with the overall focus of the lesson. Visiting musicians are used very effectively in many of the co-curriculum activities.
- In the best lessons and rehearsals well-targeted questioning is used effectively to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding as well as to check the progress they are making. However, this feature is not consistent and in some cases teachers focused too much on telling pupils what to do rather than involving them in their own learning. While teaching is always well focused, lesson objectives are sometimes confused with activities. As a result pupils do always not know if they are making sufficient progress.
- Pupils' cultural development is significantly enhanced through the wide range of musical repertoire used. Group work, within the classroom and extra-curricular activities, has a significant positive impact on pupils' social development.

### Quality of the music curriculum and extra-curricular provision

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- The school provides a good curriculum and some aspects, including the co-curriculum, are outstanding. The school is rightly proud of the breadth of the co-curriculum that enhances provision for many pupils. Many activities are open to all pupils without audition.
- The department has recently moved into new accommodation which is of very high quality. The department is well resourced, and the school plans to further extend resources to provide computers in the second classroom. There remain, however, teething problems with the smooth operation of some of the computer equipment.
- Curriculum time allowed for music is about average. Pupils in Year 9 who were interviewed said that they believed that more time should be allocated to music in Key Stage 3.

## Leadership and management

Leadership and management are good.

- You and your head of department have a very clear vision for music and its place within the school. You rightly believe that music provision should meet the needs of all pupils. Pupils in Year 9 said that all pupils, regardless of their aptitude, benefit from music lessons in the school.
- Particular efforts are made to proactively encourage the involvement of boys in activities, for example, in singing. The equal balance of boys and girls studying music for GCSE in recent years is especially notable.
- Music is being used well to develop the whole school curriculum. For example, a unit of work linking music and English, focusing on poetry and composition, is being developed for Year 9.
- Because of the school's budget deficit, opportunities for continuing professional development have been very limited. There is recognition that more support is needed, particularly in the use of new technology.
- There is no formal departmental self-evaluation process. The head of department recognises this is needed to increase consistency across the department as a whole.

## Subject issues: Data Collection and Partnerships

### Data collection

- The department is developing a diagnostic assessment system to improve further the information collected about pupils' interests and experiences when they join the school.
- Systems for collecting and recording information about pupils' attainment as they progress through the school are good. Although not directly linked to National Curriculum levels the data collected is later converted into levels. Assessment in Key Stage 4 is based on GCSE criteria and is used effectively to help pupils make very good progress.

### Partnerships

- The department has effective links with a wide range of partners. For example the school has supported music in another secondary school and a nearby primary school. Older pupils visited a professional performance of Les Miserables sitting alongside musicians in the orchestral pit. There are also strong links with a local pizza restaurant where pupils give regular performances.
- The department is involved in initiatives within the Local Authority, such as giving a priority to the learning of 'rare' instruments.

## Inclusion

- The Key Stage 3 music curriculum engages all pupils, including vulnerable and ethnic minority groups, enabling them to make good progress.
- In Key Stage 4 about one third of the pupils take GCSE music each year. This number reflects the overall cultural diversity and prior attainment of pupils in the school. Some lower attaining pupils achieve particularly well in music compared to their other subjects.
- Pupils spoke warmly about the quality of the music provision and how it offers something to everyone.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- improving the clarity of all learning objectives
- ensuring consistent use of effective strategies to involve pupils in their own learning
- enhancing the provision for ICT in music.

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

Yours sincerely

Anne Wellham  
Her Majesty's Inspector