



OFFICE FOR STANDARDS
IN EDUCATION

INSPECTING SUBJECTS AND ASPECTS 11-18

MUSIC

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INSPECTING MUSIC

INTRODUCTION

As an inspector of music, you need to find out how good the pupils are at the subject, to what extent they have the knowledge, skills and understanding that lie at its heart, and whether it captures their interest. You are likely to be able to explain your findings largely by evaluating how stimulating and effective the teaching is.

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

These are the main questions which your inspection should answer.

- How high are the standards in music, and are they high enough?
- How well are pupils progressing?
- How well is music taught?

Before you begin your inspection in the school

- Revise your knowledge of the *Handbook* and associated guidance.
- Make sure that you are familiar with the particular course objectives and examination syllabuses used by the school.

You should already have a good knowledge of the National Curriculum Programme of Study for music and the 'end of key stage descriptions' for pupils' attainment by age 14.

- Analyse performance data to form a view of the standards achieved in recent years and any trends, and to establish hypotheses about strengths and weaknesses in music.
- Study any departmental documentation which has been made available, and evaluate its potential contribution to the quality of teaching and its coverage of curricular requirements.

When you are in the school

- Use the first-hand evidence from observation of lessons, looking at pupils' work and talking with them to assess what the current pupils are like at the subject, what they do well and where they could do better. Focus on the pupils aged from 11 to 14 and in the year groups in which they become 16 and 18. Refer to the records of teachers' assessments of pupils' work. Assess what progress pupils are making through the school - how fast it is, on how wide a front and in what depth.
- Observe teaching, talk to teachers about their work, look at their plans and records, and judge how effective the teaching is - how does it contribute to pupils' attitudes to learning, progress and standards. See which approaches work well and which are unsuccessful.

- Take stock of the way any other factors affect how well music is taught and the standards achieved. Assess, in particular, how effectively the subject is led and managed.
- Make sure that your observation forms contain enough evidence to support your judgements; telling examples are needed for your subject report.

Literacy, numeracy and information technology

- Evaluate any contribution music teaching makes to developing pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy and information technology. Information and communications technology may be used to support pupils' learning in music. Here, pupils may be working below their level of competence in information technology, but this may be entirely appropriate; you need to assess the effectiveness of the use of information and communications technology in enhancing pupils' standards in music.
- Be alert to situations where weaknesses in these skills impede progress in music.
- Record your evidence and evaluations in the 'Other significant evidence' section of the observation form.

Feeding back your inspection findings

- Feed back your findings clearly and helpfully to the head of music and to the individual teachers by:
 - identifying the most important strengths and weaknesses in the teaching, and supporting your assessments with illustrations from the lessons you have seen;
 - giving convincing reasons for what you judge to be successful or otherwise, making clear how the teaching affects what is achieved;
 - showing the head of department how other factors, particularly leadership and management, affect the quality of teaching and the standards achieved;
 - ensuring that there is opportunity to discuss the findings and that points for development are identified.

Writing the subject section

- Make sure that the music section of the report tells a coherent and convincing story. It should explain why the standards achieved are as they are. In particular, report on the effectiveness of the teaching. The following questions will help you to check the quality of your reporting.
 - Are the teachers' assessments of 14 year olds and the examination results interpreted in a way which gives a clear view of the standards attained, to show how they compare with other subjects in the school, and to identify any trends over time?
 - Are there clear judgements of what is currently achieved by the pupils in the year groups in which they become 14, 16 and 18? Are the strong and weak features identified in the

different aspects of the subject?

- Is there a convincing explanation of any significant differences in standards between what is seen and what the results indicate?
- Are variations in the progress of different groups of pupils or in different years evaluated and explained?
- Does the evaluation of teaching spell out how it affects pupils' response and what they achieve? Is it clear which teaching methods are successful and which are not? Is there an explanation of any other factors, such as leadership and management, which are significant in affecting standards?
- Is it clear how far standards and teaching have improved since the last inspection and are reasons given?
- Are the main judgements supported by the most telling examples?
- Is it clear what needs to be done to improve standards in music?

ATTAINMENT AND PROGRESS

Your judgements on attainment will be based on **performance data** and direct **observations** in the school. Any differences between these judgements **must be explained convincingly**.

Interpreting data

- For pupils aged 16, compare the school's GCSE results with:
 - the results achieved in schools nationally;
 - the results for schools of 'similar type' (comprehensive, selective or modern);
 - the results achieved in other subjects in the school.

Often, small numbers of pupils are involved. In these cases, comparisons with how pupils do in their other subjects are the most realistic and helpful. You need to be alert to the size of the entry and to comment on how this relates to the entry policy or the opportunities for pupils to take the subject.

Reference back to attainment by age 14 helps an inspector to judge whether or not the attainment by age 16 is high enough. See below for teachers' assessments and the use of exemplification materials.

- For students post-16, again, resist placing too much emphasis on comparison with national A-level and AS statistics. It is more helpful to compare individual students' results in music with their results in GCSE and in other subjects in the school.

Using evidence from observations

- Judge the attainment of pupils in **class** music by the age of 14 according to what is typical in relation to the National Curriculum Programme of Study and the two attainment targets - **performing and composing**, and **listening and appraising**. To help you with this, use the **exemplification materials** published by the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (SCAA) [now the Qualifications and Assessment Authority (QCA)].

Significant weakness in any aspect of music compared with others means that standards overall are not high enough.

Pupils' understanding and enjoyment of music should be developed through activities that bring together requirements from both performing and composing, and listening and appraising, wherever possible.

Participation by pupils with special educational needs, including those in special schools may involve the use of technological aids appropriate to their needs in achieving access to all aspects of the subject, at their particular stage of development.

- Use the 'end of Key Stage 3 descriptions' as a 'benchmark' for pupils by age 14, in the context of a continuous National Curriculum for pupils aged five to 14.

For example, when judging attainment in lessons, attainment for pupils aged 13-14 should exceed the expectations for pupils by age 11; the attainment of the current pupils in the year in which they become 14 should reflect or be approaching that portrayed in the 'end of Key Stage 3 description', depending on the timing of the inspection.

- For pupils aged 14, **use teachers' assessments** alongside your observations as an indicator of attainment and a means of comparing matters such as the achievements of boys and girls.
- Judge the attainment of pupils following examination courses to 16 and 18 by the course objectives and requirements.
- Judge the standards demonstrated during **instrumental lessons**, or during rehearsals of choirs or other voluntary ensembles, using the same criteria as for class music. Expectations concerning progress in instrumental lessons depend on factors including the length of time for which pupils have had these lessons.

Take account of attainment in these sessions in evaluating overall attainment in music for the pupils who are involved.

When activities involve pupils from several year groups, perhaps a steel pans rehearsal, you should form an overall view of the standard achieved, but be alert to and record any differences in attainment of different year groups, where it is possible to detect them.

- Use **aural observation** as the main source of evidence of attainment in music.

Evaluate pupils' performances and compositions, heard live or through audio or video recordings, and the processes they use when performing and composing. Your

observations also contribute to evaluating pupils' listening and appraising through the extent to which they apply musical knowledge when they are performing and composing and working to improve the quality of their performances and compositions.

- If there is any **written evidence**, such as scores or verbal accounts, use it to refine the judgements that you make aurally.

You should be aware of a possible 'mismatch' between a composition and its score; composers often do not write down all their musical intentions, and may make mistakes when they try to translate musical sounds into musical notation.

- Wherever you can, observe whole class or instrumental lessons.

This often allows judgements of attainment to be made with greater security because you are able to evaluate the processes that the pupils use and the products that result.

- As you **observe pupils** in class and instrumental lessons, form views of attainment and progress. Use evidence of the extent to which pupils:

- produce compositions of high musical quality, and accurate, expressive performances of appropriate technical standard;
- use technical vocabulary when talking about music;
- demonstrate technical and expressive control of instruments and their voices when composing, and listen critically to their work and that of their peers;
- use their musical imagination when they play instruments or sing;
- notice relationships between the music which they compose and perform, and the music they appraise, and capitalise on them.

Progress is marked, not only by their increase in musical knowledge, understanding and skills, but by increase in:

- *aural acuity and musical memory;*
- *ability to select and apply techniques which are fit for their purpose when playing instruments or singing;*
- *ability to reflect on and analyse their performance and compositions and those of their peers, and plan ways of improving them;*
- *ability to apply knowledge gained through listening to and appraising music, when they are performing and composing.*

These attributes will help you to shape your analysis of strengths and weaknesses in music as well as the overall judgement about attainment and progress. Remember that in your reporting you need to go further than citing the attributes; draw on the most telling evidence which exemplifies them.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES TO LEARNING

- Look out for characteristics that pupils should show in music such as the following:
 - pride in their compositions and performances;
 - readiness to improve their performances and compositions, to seek different ways of solving musical problems and to persevere when a solution proves elusive;
 - sense of purpose when exploring music and using musical instruments;
 - sensitivity and openness to the teacher's and other pupils' musical ideas and judgements;
 - willingness and capacity to take the lead or support their peers as appropriate during ensemble performances.

TEACHING

- Judge the quality of teaching by weighing its strengths and weaknesses in relation to the criteria in the *Framework*, and assess its **impact on educational standards**.

In effective music teaching, teachers use their enthusiasm and secure command of the subject to promote music making of high quality.

Teaching cannot be satisfactory where pupils, or a significant minority of them, learn less than you would expect considering what they already knew. The same is true where they do not firmly consolidate their learning.

- Evaluate the work of peripatetic instrumental teachers in the same way as all other teaching.

*Ensure that the status of instrumental teachers is recorded accurately on observation forms and that instrumental lessons are coded as: Code 1: MU;
Code 2: IN.*

- Inform your evaluation of teaching by reference to the characteristics of effective lessons, in which teachers:
 - encourage performances and compositions of high musical quality, and enable pupils to feel the success of musical achievement (*subject knowledge, expectations, planning*);
 - ensure pupils reflect on and evaluate their performances and compositions (*subject knowledge, expectations, methodology, planning*);
 - encourage pupils to use their initiative and musical imagination (*assessment, expectations,*

planning);

- build on the musical attainment which pupils have developed inside and outside school (*assessment, planning*);
 - teach music theory within a practical musical context, and help pupils to develop and apply their musical knowledge when performing and composing (*subject knowledge, methodology, planning, expectations*);
 - help pupils to solve technical problems they encounter when playing instruments and singing (*subject knowledge, methodology, expectations*);
 - ensure that activities which require regular development, such as singing, take place frequently (*planning*);
 - use pupils' time efficiently - for instance, by ensuring that any compositions which are to be completed over several sessions are recorded in some way (*use of time and resources*);
 - provide opportunities for pupils to appraise music which is played or replayed with high musical quality (*resources, expectations*).
- You should be alert to teaching which:
- provides opportunity for musical activity but does not help pupils to make progress;
 - is not planned with the particular needs of the class in mind; it may be too dependent on published schemes of work, or lessons may be repeated without sufficient consideration to several classes in the same or different year groups;
 - introduces pupils to staff notation before they are ready to understand its role and limitations and apply it effectively to some of their performing and composing;
 - fails to provide opportunities for pupils to reflect on their work and develop their musical memory and ability to internalise music;
 - assumes, without adequate investigation, that pupils have had little previous experience of music;
 - makes poor use of pupils' time - for instance, by giving tasks suitable for one pupil to pairs of pupils sharing keyboards;
 - makes poor use of accommodation by expecting pupils to work in an environment so noisy that they cannot hear their work properly;
 - fails to bring pupils into contact with the raw materials of music: sounds with a range of musical qualities.

High musical accomplishment by teachers only deserves positive judgements if they use it effectively to promote pupils' learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF PROVISION OR MANAGEMENT

Curriculum and assessment

- Be alert to factors which can affect the quality of teaching and the standards achieved. However, recognise that they are only significant if they have an effect. For example, you might consider whether:
 - the time for music, for pupils aged 11 to 14, is enough to allow the requirements of the National Curriculum to be met, and is organised so that pupils can make and sustain progress;
 - in any expressive arts or performing arts courses for pupils aged 14 to 16, or in the sixth form, enough time is allowed for music and it is organised so that the disciplines of music can be taught and developed in a consistent and coherent way;
 - pupils have the opportunity to study music at ages 14 to 16 and in the sixth form, if they wish to;
 - assessment, recording and reporting focuses on pupils' attainment in performing, composing, listening and appraising, and takes account of attainment both within and beyond music lessons.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

- Take account of examples like the following where music can contribute to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development:
 - opportunities are provided for pupils to reflect on the beauty and wonder of music, and be moved by music;
 - pupils are asked to reflect on the moral issues which arise when music is used to change people's behaviour - for example, in supermarkets, before football matches or in political contexts;
 - pupils are asked to consider the roles of music in society, and the circumstances in which music may be perceived by some people as a nuisance, or form of pollution;
 - teaching encourages pupils be to open to, and value, the music of all cultures, and to understand how the conventions of music of a broad cultural base can be used in their compositions.

Partnership with parents and the community

- Give particular focus to the following where they have an impact on the quality of provision and achievement:
 - the relationship between aspects of the music curriculum in the school, and music making in the community;

- any contribution of musicians in the community to the musical life of the school.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

- Focus on features which affect teaching or the standards achieved, such as whether:
 - the accommodation and its management allow pupils to compose and perform music without being disturbed;
 - an adequate range of good quality tuned and untuned instruments is available, including chromatic, bass and electronic instruments, and ones which reflect a broad cultural base;
 - musical instruments and equipment are adequately maintained and used with respect for health and safety.

You should check that pupils do not share instruments which are blown by mouth.

OBSERVATION FORMS

There follow two sample observation forms for music. These are intended to show how evidence and judgements contribute to a coherent picture of attainment in these music lessons. In one lesson, the teaching is judged to be 'very good' (grade 2) and in the other it is considered 'satisfactory' (grade 4).

YEAR 10 MIXED ABILITY - Very good teaching

CONTEXT: One in a series of lessons this half term to compose, rehearse, perform Christmas songs from chosen or own lyrics. Students work on individual compositions using a variety of orchestral, band, rock and classroom instruments and helping one another.
TEACHING: High expectations: activities well chosen to motivate students and to meet their needs; individual challenging targets set, and modified upwards when appropriate. Very good feedback and advice to individuals and questions which challenge them to appraise and improve their own compositions. Good methodology and v effective use of time: performing, listening, composing have been well integrated; creates purposeful working environment in which pupils have time to think and experiment, and yet work with unremitting pace. Good organisation of resources and material. Individual targets for homework. Grade 2
RESPONSE: V well motivated ps who cooperate sensitively and sympathetically with one another. Keen to perform each other's work. Listening attentively and offering helpful, constructive criticism to each other. Grade 2
ATTAINMENT Some good playing and singing skills and improvisation. Composition reveals high level of understanding of word setting, and ways of developing chord sequences and melody. Ps understand the relationship between performing, listening and composing and use appropriate technical vocabulary when talking to the CT and each other. Grade 3
PROGRESS: Christmas songs emerging in a range of styles shows strong development in composing skills, with improvement in performing and improvising standards particularly evident compared with Year 9. A number of ps have no instrumental lessons but all are able to extend and develop their Christmas songs effectively. Grade 3

MUSIC YEAR 8 MIXED ABILITY - Satisfactory teaching

CONTEXT: Water music project. Focus is selection of two ideas (rain and waterfall) etc and sounds to reflect idea. Four instruments in combination to be used. Ostinato to be added, on DFA.
TEACHING: Clear explanation of two tasks. Nice atmosphere (all seated on carpets). Manages class well in groups, calling them together on occasion to review. Satisfactory pace. Encouraging refining of work, and allowing a degree of freedom. Intervening appropriately and offering suggestions for improvement. Grade 4
RESPONSE: Enthusiastic - can discuss work in some detail and know what they want to do. Rather high sound level stemming from pupils' inexperience with group percussion work over extended periods. Discuss work together and take decisions. Some work well independently; relationships and attitudes are positive. Grade 3
ATTAINMENT: Generally lower than expectation, owing to lack of experience in composing activities. Are still developing ability to explore sounds/musical ideas sensibly. A small minority of pupils demonstrate levels of attainment at the expectations, working to refine, reorganise and present performances. Grade 5
PROGRESS: Progress mainly in learning skills - observing, co-operating, seeking patterns, solving problems. Some evidence of gains in musical knowledge, skills and understanding among most pupils. Grade 4

ABOUT THIS BOOKLET

This is one of a set of booklets which make up *Inspecting subjects and aspects 11-18*. The set consists of:

- an introductory booklet, *General guidance*, which is for all inspectors who evaluate the work of secondary age pupils - it is mainly about inspecting subjects;
- separate booklets on inspecting specific subjects and aspects; the contents page of *General guidance* shows the subjects and aspects which have booklets.

The main points in the *General guidance* are summarised in each subject, but if you are inspecting the work of secondary age pupils you should read the introductory booklet so that you are fully in the picture of what you have to do.

The contents of all the booklets are on the Internet and can be accessed from OFSTED's website [<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk>]. This will allow you to obtain guidance for individual subjects or aspects.

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