

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

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



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Mrs C Julian
Headteacher
Crich Junior School
School Lane
Crich
Derbyshire
DE4 5DF

Dear Mrs Julian

Ofsted 2012–13 good practice survey inspection programme: music

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 13 July 2012 to look at work in music and particularly the impact of your partnership work with Derbyshire County and City Music Service.

The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to our national evaluation and reporting, including the forthcoming report on music education partnerships (commissioned as part of the National Plan for Music Education). 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; a meeting with the head of the music service; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; a working lunch with governors and other members of the school community; and observation of a whole-class recorder lesson and rehearsals for the choir and orchestra.

Features of good practice

- Although the school only numbers 51 on roll, an outstanding vision and commitment ensures that all pupils are included and benefit from a good musical education. The fact that every single pupil is able to make good musical progress, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, and those who are extremely able, represents exemplary practice. Nowhere is this shown more than in the orchestra. This group involves over 30 pupils including some working at Grade 5 standard, and some with learning difficulties who are supported very well by teaching assistants.

- High standards are achieved in the four-part recorder ensemble. As with other groups, and the excellent number who receive additional instrumental tuition, boys and girls are equally well represented.
- Although the two class teachers are involved in teaching music through the cross-curricular project work and leadership of the choir, you have made judicious use of partners to lead other aspects of music work. These include instrumental teachers engaged through the music service, the orchestra teacher who you employ privately, and a parent-volunteer who teaches the recorders. Older pupils also take the lead – for example, the Year 6 girls who directed parts of the choir and orchestra rehearsals.
- Perhaps the most striking feature of the school's music organisation is that no apparent divisions exist between curriculum and extra-curricular work, or between year groups. Ensemble work takes place as part of curriculum time, and involves children from across the school. Their individual abilities, needs and progress are the dominant factor when planning all activities, and consequently all are helped to make good progress. However, compared to time devoted to learning to playing instruments and singing, less focus is given to composing and music technology work.
- The music service plays a valuable part in quality assuring the school's provision. A regular appraisal system monitors the work of accredited instrumental teachers. In addition, the music service's 'Quality Mark' scheme, renewed every three years, provides a clear assessment of areas of strength and areas for further improvement. Scrutiny and discussion of your school's recent Quality Mark assessment suggested that this evaluation was both accurate and helpful.
- Partnership with the music service also promotes pupils' participation in local and regional workshops and events. However, links are more limited beyond the local authority. It would be beneficial for pupils and staff to work in partnership from other good practice schools, particularly in areas that are more culturally diverse than your school's catchment area.

Areas for further development, which we discussed, include:

- increasing opportunities for pupils to explore music through composing work
- exploring links with other good practice schools beyond the local area, particularly to widen pupils' practical experience of different cultures.

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 published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Mark Phillips
Her Majesty's Inspector