

Music Curriculum Guidance for Schools

Ofsted Inspection Framework and Handbook

This document is intended for Headteachers, Senior Leadership Teams, Governors and Music Leaders.

Ofsted Framework and Handbook for inspection

The Education Inspection Framework ([EIF](#)) and Ofsted School Inspection handbook (link [HERE](#)) are referenced below. We highlight areas which all schools should be mindful regarding ensuring that they provide a broad, balanced and relevant music education for all learners.

All quotes below are taken from the Ofsted School Inspection handbook, followed by suggested questions to ask yourself in reference to a quality music education provision. These are but a handful within the entire handbook.

1. Paragraph 44 – Risk Assessment: School workforce data

“In a risk assessment, we analyse: school workforce census data”

This will contain each school’s report on the number of hours of teaching provided in each school year for each subject. Schools that are not offering any music may be flagged up in this process.

Questions to consider:

- *Who is delivering your music curriculum lessons?*
 - *Are they appropriately qualified?*
 - *How are they supported in accessing appropriate music-specific professional development?*
- *How are these lessons structured?*
 - *Are music curriculum lessons timetabled to allow progressive development of learning skills and knowledge through weekly teaching?*
 - *If adopting a carousel approach, how is this developing skills and knowledge on a progressive basis?*
- *Would the TBMH School Music Policy (see p.6) and TBMH Self-evaluation tool (see p.9) help identify how music is being delivered, and areas to develop?*

2. Paragraph 52 – qualifying complaints, curriculum/subject breadth/balance

“We may decide that we should inspect a school earlier than its next scheduled inspection if:

- a subject or thematic survey inspection raises general concerns
- we have received a qualifying complaint about the school that, taken alongside other available evidence, suggests that it would be appropriate to do so
- concerns are identified about the breadth and balance of the curriculum (including if the statutory requirement to publish information to parents is not met)”

Ofsted inspectors will receive information about qualifying complaints. It is not clear if lack of access to a curriculum subject is considered to be a qualifying complaint. Other complaints may be noted by the team as well as those pertaining to safeguarding.

Questions to consider:

- *Is the school curriculum genuinely broad and balanced to reflect the needs of all learners, including pupils with SEND (i.e. in accessing a range of arts subjects)?*
- *Would the TBMH School Music Policy (see p.6) and TBMH Self-evaluation tool (see p.7-9) help identify how music is being delivered, and areas to develop?*

3. Paragraph 69 – Statutory requirements

“OFSTED will:

- report on any failure to comply with statutory requirements when they form part of the inspection framework and evaluation schedule, including those relating to the workforce”

It is not clear if or how this might identify schools failing to meet statutory requirements in relation to curriculum subjects. However, several non-core curriculum areas will be subject to the process of a “deep dive.” This could include music.

Questions to consider:

- *If pressed by an inspector, are you able to talk about how your curriculum is sequenced to allow progressive development of learning skills and knowledge through weekly teaching?*
- *Can you provide pupil information for music/arts subjects to demonstrate impact?*
- *Do your Schemes of Work appropriately reflect learning needs of your pupils, to allow engaged learning to take place?*
- *Does your school assessment process allow flexibility for arts subjects to reflect assessment/progress in different ways?*

4. Paragraph 193 - Spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development

“Before making the final judgement on overall effectiveness, inspectors will always consider the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils at the school, and evaluate the extent to which the school’s education provision meets different pupils’ needs, including pupils with SEND.” Attention to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in the previous framework for inspection has often led to mention of good practice in relation to music and the Arts in inspection reports.

Para 244 “Inspectors will evaluate the effectiveness of the school’s provision for pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. This is a broad concept that can be seen across the school’s activities, but draws together many of the areas covered by the personal development judgement.”

The new framework specifically mentions the following.

- sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about themselves, others and the world around them (para 245)
- use of imagination and creativity in their learning (para 245)
- willingness to reflect on their experiences. (para 245)
- use of a range of social skills in different contexts, for example working and socialising with other pupils, including those from different religious, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds (para 247)
- interest in exploring, improving understanding of and showing respect for different faiths and cultural diversity and the extent to which they understand, accept, respect and celebrate diversity. This is shown by their respect and attitudes towards different religious, ethnic and socio-economic groups in the local, national and global communities. (paragraph 248)
- willingness to participate in and respond positively to artistic, musical, sporting and cultural opportunities (para 248)

Questions to consider:

- *Are pupils able to express themselves through arts/music both in the curriculum, and through programmed extra-curricular activities?*
- *Is there a weekly singing opportunity for all pupils (e.g. through collective worship/assembly)?*
- *Are your pupils allowed to leave curriculum lessons to attend instrumental/vocal lessons, or to attend school ensemble rehearsals?*
- *Are pupils taken to a range of external interactive live artistic activities/performances to broaden their exposure to a range of opportunities?*
- *Are your music teachers given opportunities to attend external CPD events that will result in a broad range of benefits for pupils?*

5. Paragraph 199 – National Curriculum, British Values, Collective Worship

“All pupils in maintained schools are expected to study the basic curriculum, which includes national curriculum, religious education and age-appropriate relationship and sex education. Academies are expected to offer all pupils a broad curriculum that should be similar in breath and ambition.”

Although not specified in this paragraph there is also a duty on schools regarding fundamental British values (para 243) and collective worship (para 58). Music is part of the national curriculum and should be taught to all pupils until the end of KS3.

Questions to consider:

- *Is there a weekly singing opportunity for all pupils (e.g. through collective worship/assembly)?*
- *How is your school proactively using music/arts subjects to promote fundamental British values, and to engage all learners?*
- *How is your school using music/arts subjects to engage parents/carers and the wider community?*

6. Paragraph 200 – Curriculum Approaches

“We will judge schools taking radically different approaches to the curriculum fairly. We recognise the importance of schools’ autonomy to choose their own curriculum approaches. If leaders are able to show that they have thought carefully, that they have built a curriculum with appropriate coverage, content, structure and sequencing, and that it has been implemented effectively, then inspectors will assess a school’s curriculum favourably.”

Some have expressed concern about this paragraph because they believe it might provide a means of explaining away the lack of a rigorous and comprehensive Arts curriculum. It is difficult to see however, how a curriculum could be said to have ‘appropriate coverage and content’ if a subject which is so unequivocally a requirement for cultural capital (para 203 and 225) were missing.

Questions to consider:

- *Do your Schemes of Work appropriately reflect learning needs of your pupils, to allow engaged learning to take place?*
- *Is your school able to talk about how your curriculum is sequenced to allow progressive development of learning skills and knowledge through weekly teaching?*
- *Does your school assessment process allow flexibility for arts subjects to reflect assessment/progress in different ways?*
- *Has your school music teacher(s) been supported in accessing peer development with music teachers in other schools to help support and quality assure a secure curriculum?*
- *Are your music teachers given opportunities to attend external CPD events that will result in a broad range of benefits for pupils?*

7. Paragraph 203 – Cultural Capital

“As part of making the judgement about the quality of education, inspectors will consider the extent to which schools are equipping pupils with the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life. Our understanding of ‘knowledge and cultural capital’ is derived from the following wording in the national curriculum:

‘It is the essential knowledge that pupils need to be educated citizens, introducing them to the best that has been thought and said and helping to engender an appreciation of human creativity and achievement.’

Questions to consider:

- *Are pupils able to positively articulate their experiences of music/arts subjects that they are exposed to through their school life?*
- *Are pupils actively encouraged to engage with music/arts subjects as part of healthy balanced approach to learning?*
- *Are pupils able to express themselves through arts/music both in the curriculum, and through programmed extra-curricular activities?*
- *Are pupils taken to a range of external interactive live artistic activities/performances to broaden their exposure to a range of opportunities?*

8. Paragraph 207 – Implementation

“Implementation:

207. In evaluating the implementation of the curriculum, inspectors will primarily evaluate how the curriculum is taught at subject and classroom level.

208. Research and inspection evidence suggest that the most important factors in how, and how effectively, the curriculum is taught and assessed are that:

- Teachers have expert knowledge of the subjects that they teach. If they do not, they are supported to address gaps in their knowledge so that pupils are not disadvantaged by ineffective teaching.”

Inspection reports frequently mention the detrimental impact of teachers’ poor subject knowledge on the quality of certain subjects. This is more frequently mentioned in reports on primary schools. The text in this paragraph of the handbook is much clearer about expectations on schools. It also highlights the need to employ teachers with proper knowledge of the curriculum, carefully planned schemes or sufficient CPD in subject areas.

Questions to consider:

- *Who is delivering your music curriculum lessons?*
 - *Are they appropriately qualified?*
 - *How are they supported in accessing appropriate music-specific professional development?*
- *Are your music teachers given opportunities to attend external CPD events that will result in improved learning?*
- *Do your Schemes of Work appropriately reflect learning needs of your pupils, to allow engaged learning to take place?*
- *Does your school assessment process allow flexibility for arts subjects to reflect assessment/progress in different ways?*
- *Has your school music teacher been supported in accessing peer development with music teachers in other schools to help support and quality assure a secure curriculum?*

9. Paragraph 255 – Personal development

“Sources of evidence specific to personal development. Inspectors will use a range of evidence to evaluate personal development, including:

- how curriculum subjects such as citizenship, RE, and other areas such as personal, social, health and economic education, and relationship and sex education, contribute to pupils’ personal development.”

Questions to consider:

- *Are pupils able to positively articulate their experiences of music/arts subjects that they are exposed to through their school life?*
- *Are pupils actively encouraged to engage with music/arts subjects as part of healthy balanced approach to learning and their personal development?*
- *Are pupils able to express themselves through arts/music both in the curriculum, and through programmed extra-curricular activities?*
- *Are pupils taken to a range of external interactive live artistic activities/performances to broaden their exposure to a range of opportunities?*

Schools should also be aware of and refer to the [Model Music Curriculum](#) (released March 2021). There is supporting guidance about this on the Tri-borough Music Hub website.

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