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Mrs L McKellar
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs McKellar

Ofsted 2010–11 subject survey inspection programme: music

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and students, during my visit on 27 January 2011 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 selected pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of students' work; observation of one lesson and an extra-curricular drumming activity.

The overall effectiveness of music is good.

Achievement in music

Achievement in music is good.

- Pupils in both the primary school and Key Stage 3 reach standards that are below those seen nationally, in all aspects of music learning. However, all pupils make good progress because there is a systematic development of their musical skills, knowledge and understanding. As a result, pupils perform confidently and sing with good attention to intonation and vocal quality.
- No pupils at Key Stage 4 currently study music. However, all are involved in music workshops and some take part in extra-curricular activities.
- Pupils' participation in lunchtime music clubs is broadly satisfactory. They display very positive attitudes towards music. They enjoy and appreciate the different opportunities they have to make music together.

Quality of teaching in music

The quality of teaching in music is good.

- Music lessons are taught by a capable musician who brings good musical skills and expertise to lessons. Ideas and techniques are successfully modelled to pupils and questioning is used effectively so that they can explain and demonstrate their ideas musically.
- Planning is thorough and starter activities are carefully linked to the main part of the lesson. Tasks have a clear musical focus and staff have high expectations of pupils' work and abilities. However at present, pupils have limited understanding of how they can improve their work.
- Some pupils, who have particular disabilities, are carefully supported by teaching assistants who enable them unobtrusively to be completely involved in practical work.
- Assessing the progress pupils make in lessons is undertaken regularly. This, together with teachers' regular evaluation of each lesson, enables activities and skills to be revisited in subsequent lessons when needed. This approach ensures good progress is made in lessons.

Quality of the curriculum in music

The quality of the curriculum in music is good.

- The scheme of work for pupils in Year 1 to 6 is carefully planned to include all aspects of music learning and to link, when appropriate, to pupils' musical interests outside school and local and national developments. This ensures that pupils do not repeat musical topics as they move through the primary classes. Musical concepts and traditions are linked together so that pupils become familiar with different styles of music.
- In Years 7 to 9, music lessons are taught in conjunction with drama and dance lessons. However, planning ensures that pupils' musical skills are developed regularly and these lessons are supplemented by concerts and workshops from a number of external professional musicians. Pupils of all ages are familiar with different computer programs and these help to increase the variety of sound sources available.
- A small number of extra-curricular activities are provided for pupils. Leaders recognise that, at present, pupils are unable to practise during school time and are actively looking to ensure that this is possible.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in music

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

- Leaders take every opportunity to provide appropriate musical opportunities for all pupils and to engage them in different styles of music. Falling roles and timetable constraints are not seen as barriers, however,

they do currently restrict the opportunity to expand the music curriculum as leaders would wish.

- Self-evaluation correctly identifies the strengths of music provision and areas that need further development. New initiatives, for example, incorporating the 'Musical Futures' programme for some pupils, are being considered carefully for their impact on pupils' progress.
- Leaders are not aware about the local authorities 'Wider Opportunities' programme, provided through the Standards Fund, or how their pupils can be involved.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- developing assessment further by:
 - ensuring that pupils are involved in evaluating their own work and deciding what they need to do to improve
- considering how pupils can be involved in accredited music courses
- providing time during the school day for pupils to practise their instrumental skills.

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. It may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection. Except in the case of academies, a copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

Marianne Young
Her Majesty's Inspector