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Mrs S Humphreys  
Headteacher  
Hallwood Park Primary School and Nursery  
Hallwood Park Avenue  
Hallwood Park  
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WA7 2FL

Dear Mrs Humphreys

### **Ofsted 2010–11 subject survey inspection programme: music**

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and pupils, during my visit on 23 March 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 pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of six lessons and a whole-school singing session.

The overall effectiveness of music is good.

#### **Achievement in music**

Achievement in music is good.

- Pupils make good progress from generally low starting points and, by the end of Year 6, their attainment is in line with national expectations. The standard of their singing is particularly good. They sing confidently, in unison and in parts, producing a clear and pleasant tone and very good articulation, intonation and ensemble. They are also able to adapt their approach to the varying styles of music that they perform. In the instrumental work seen, they performed accurately, confidently and with discipline. Their creative music making is less well developed, as the school's self-evaluation recognises. Pupils listen to a wide range of music and Year 6 pupils were able to give a simple explanation of how the

minimalist approaches of Philip Glass differed from those of other composers whose music they had heard.

- During their time in Years 4 and 5, all pupils take part in the whole-class 'Wider Opportunities' instrumental teaching programme which, over the last three years, has focused on guitar tuition, samba drumming and African drumming. All pupils take part in regular musical performances within the school and the local community and a high proportion are involved in weekly lunchtime or after-school musical activities, as well as instrumental lessons.
- Pupils' personal development through music is good. They enjoy their music making and, at each key stage, they work with enthusiasm and concentration, cooperating well with each other and with their teachers.

### **Quality of teaching in music**

The quality of teaching in music is good.

- All teachers teach music to their own classes. Although most have limited musical training, they make very effective use of their generic teaching skills to provide their pupils with worthwhile experiences in the subject. Good collaboration between teachers and teaching assistants ensures that children of all abilities are closely engaged in activities.
- All the lessons seen focused on practical music making or movement to music. There was also a consistent emphasis on developing pupils' understanding of musical concepts and on using the correct technical vocabulary when discussing music. In some instances, however, this limited the opportunities for pupils to be more adventurous and experimental in creating their own music.
- The pupils had a clear understanding of what was expected of them and knew what they needed to do to improve further.
- Pupils' musical progress is monitored carefully but is not always supported sufficiently by audio and video recordings of their work.

### **Quality of the curriculum in music**

The quality of the curriculum in music is good.

- Every class follows a carefully planned programme of work based on a published scheme which has been adapted to the particular needs of the pupils. This provides appropriate coverage, development and continuity in pupils' musical experiences. Music is also an integral part of topic work. However, it is unclear to what extent this aspect of provision ensures progression in the subject.
- In addition to the class lessons, the school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities through the Wider Opportunities programmes and through additional enrichment activities, such as individual instrumental lessons and the recently introduced work on music technology.

- From a young age, all the children have regular opportunities to take part in public performances, ranging from the area infant music festival to appearances in the local theatre with national and international artists.
- Within and outside school, the pupils encounter a wide range of musical styles and genres and gain experiences that extend their horizons both culturally and socially.

### **Effectiveness of leadership and management in music**

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

- You place a considerable focus on music in the school and have a clear vision for its further development. This is shared by a very dedicated music coordinator and class teachers who have worked hard to develop their own confidence and skills, in order to provide their pupils with a good range of musical experiences.
- The school's own evaluation of music provision is thorough and informed by regular classroom observations; feedback from pupils, parents and staff; and by a careful analysis of teachers' developmental needs. It has identified the right areas for improvement.
- Your plans for the future reflect a clear understanding of the most recent national initiatives in music education. They build on the strong partnerships established with the local authority, neighbouring schools and training providers.

### **Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:**

- increasing the focus on music technology within the curriculum by:
  - investing in a greater range of appropriate hardware and software
  - providing relevant training for staff
  - making music technology a regular part of provision in all classes
- increasing the focus on composition in the classroom by giving pupils regular opportunities to experiment with sounds and invent their own music
- extending the assessment procedures by using audio and video recordings of work to monitor the musical progress of individuals and groups of pupils.

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

**Aelwyn Pugh**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**