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Dr D Ramsay
Headteacher
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Dear Dr Ramsay

Ofsted 2011–12 subject survey inspection programme: music

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and pupils, during my visit on 11 May 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 four lessons and other music activities.

The overall effectiveness of music is good.

Achievement in music

Achievement in music is good overall.

- Pupils make good progress as a direct result of good teaching. Standards are broadly average by Year 6. Singing standards exceed expectations. Pupils produce a strong, confident sound when singing and show a good sense of rhythm and melodic line. However, this is more notable in unison work than in songs with more than one part. Composing receives less emphasis and, consequently, pupils' skills in creating musical ideas are not as well developed as their singing.
- Music makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, cultural and social development. Pupils show a keen interest in music of different styles, genres and traditions. They like music and enjoy performing to one another in lessons and in school concerts. The videos of concerts and

shows illustrate the sheer energy and commitment that pupils put into performing.

- All pupils participate in concerts and performances. Attendance at choir is good with pupils from all groups well represented. Participation in instrumental tuition is very good. Around half the pupils learn guitar in school and many pupils learn other instruments through private tuition.

Quality of teaching in music

The quality of teaching in music is good.

- Class lessons and the whole-school weekly musical skills sessions focus appropriately on practical musical activity. In the best lessons observed, musical knowledge was taught in a seamless way through active involvement in singing or playing. Dance lessons make useful contributions to pupils' understanding of musical vocabulary. Singing is taught well. Pupils pick up new melodies quickly and are keen to practise and improve their singing.
- The specialist teaching from the local authority's community music service (CMS) is very effective. Planned activities are highly relevant to the main focus of musical learning. In a very successful lesson on pitch, each task built progressively on the previous one to develop musical understanding and aural awareness. Pupils were constantly involved and highly engaged. Learning was supported by good ongoing assessment, to support individual pupils and to extend or clarify as necessary.
- Teachers' planning focuses clearly on the musical skills and knowledge to be developed in lessons. Pupils are encouraged to perform, share ideas or to direct the singing. The good attention to involving pupils in active tasks contributes to their good progress in lessons and their positive attitudes.

Quality of the curriculum in music

The quality of the curriculum in music is satisfactory.

- Curriculum music in Years 4 and 5 is provided through the CMS. Planning for Year 4 includes a range of musical experiences and provides a good foundation for instrumental tuition in Year 5. All pupils also benefit from weekly musical skills sessions, provided by the local secondary school. Pupils clearly enjoy the variety of curriculum provision, which in some years is complemented by lesson taken by class teachers. However, the mixture of provision means that some classes have a broader curriculum and more time for music than others. The school does not have an overview plan which promotes the secure progression of necessary musical skills from year to year.
- The range of extra-curricular activities in music is satisfactory overall but pupils who play instruments do not have enough opportunities to attend clubs and to contribute to the musical life of the school. Visiting musicians come into school to broaden pupils' knowledge of different styles of music, including samba and African drumming. Pupils value the school's ongoing

links with the Watota children's choir and very much enjoyed the choir's visit to their school.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in music

The effectiveness of leadership and management in music is good.

- Over many years, the governing body and senior leaders have forged strong partnerships with the local secondary school and CMS. Both partnerships are well established and make a strong contribution to the good outcomes in music. More recently, music leadership has been less effective as the school has had a short period without a subject leader. However, you have taken on responsibility for the subject and have already identified appropriate priorities to improve music provision further.
- There is a clear commitment to enabling all pupils to benefit from musical events in school, performances in the community and from instrumental provision. For example, in Year 5, the whole year group learns guitar through the CMS and all pupils continue to receive free tuition in Year 6 provided by the local secondary school.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- improving pupils' progress in creating musical ideas and part-singing
- providing a range of opportunities for pupils who learn instruments, both privately and through school, to attend clubs and contribute to the musical life of the school
- devising an overview plan to demonstrate how musical skills will be developed between Year 3 and Year 6, supported by assessment.

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

Margaret Dickinson
Her Majesty's Inspector