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Mr M Foster
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Foster

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 7 June 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: discussions with staff and pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; joint observations of four lessons with you; observation of music ensembles and a singing assembly.

The overall effectiveness of music is satisfactory.

Achievement in music

Achievement in music is satisfactory.

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage receive a carefully planned mixture of adult-led music games and songs, together with opportunities for them to explore different instruments on their own. This approach secures children's interest in music and enables them to make the expected progress.
- Pupils make satisfactory progress to reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 6. Vocal work features regularly in class lessons and singing assemblies. Warm-up exercises and attention to rehearsing difficult parts are used particularly well in the assemblies, and this enables pupils to improve the quality of their singing.
- Pupils enthusiastically welcome the new musical opportunities provided for them out of lesson time, for example, working with students from the local

secondary school, and being part of the choir and the recorder group. Currently, though, no pupil receives additional individual instrumental lessons.

Quality of teaching in music

The quality of teaching in music is satisfactory.

- Pupils' good behaviour and their keenness when contributing ideas are evident in music lessons. They confidently interpret rhythmic patterns using familiar words and symbols. Class teachers demonstrate music successfully; however, too often, pupils' first response is accepted very readily and difficult parts are not rehearsed to ensure better than satisfactory improvements.
- Musical terminology is used regularly and, generally, successfully by teachers. Appropriate repertoire is chosen in order to engage pupils in their learning. On occasions, teachers try to accomplish too much in a lesson and this leads to some aspects being insufficiently covered. Leaders recognise that not all teachers are sufficiently skilled when deciding what to omit from lessons.
- The use of audio recordings in lessons so that pupils can hear their performances and decide how these can be improved, is underdeveloped.

Quality of the curriculum in music

The quality of the curriculum in music is satisfactory.

- A commercial scheme of work is used by all teachers. However, their confidence and musical expertise in adapting this to meet the needs of their pupils are varied. The school is also developing a creative curriculum and music is used regularly to support other subject areas.
- At present, pupils have limited experience of learning about music from other cultures. Leaders are exploring ways to incorporate this aspect into the music curriculum together with opportunities to use computer programs to support musical learning.
- Classroom music lessons are supplemented by additional music events, for example, Year 4 pupils worked with staff from a local secondary school to play the steel pans. However, this event was not linked to the classroom provision and thus was not developed when the external staff left.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in music

The effectiveness of leadership and management in music is satisfactory.

- The recently appointed subject leader has provided effective support through team teaching for staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Staff report that they have benefited considerably from this approach. As a result, teachers' musical understanding and confidence when planning and teaching music lessons, have been raised.

- Teachers from the local authority's music service have taught class lessons for the older pupils. This work is designed to provide training for their teachers and, although helpful, has not been linked to the ongoing class curriculum.
- A recording system is being developed. Currently, it mainly logs that pupils have completed a task and leaders recognise the need for it to be improved to encourage teachers' qualitative assessments of individual pupils' musical strengths.
- Before the inspection, the school had no knowledge of the 'Wider Opportunities' programme funded by the government and taught by the music service. The school is, however, involved in a local singing initiative run by the local authority.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- improving the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - rehearsing aspects of pupils' work more robustly in order to improve the musical quality reached
 - making audio recordings regularly to help pupils understand how to make improvements to their work
- ensuring that pupils have opportunities to experience and learn about music from other cultures
- refining the current assessment system so that it records clear information about how well pupils have learnt
- ensuring that teaching from staff at the music service and other external providers ties in more closely with the current classroom music curriculum.

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