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Mrs A Kenny  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Kenny

### **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 6 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; analysis of pupils' work; observation of four lessons, group instrumental lessons and a hymn practice for the whole school.

The overall effectiveness of music is satisfactory.

#### **Achievement in music**

Achievement in music is satisfactory.

- The children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have had limited musical experiences before they start in the Reception class. Through a well-structured provision of music games and songs, they make broadly expected progress in their musical development.
- Most pupils make satisfactory progress although standards remain below average. The current Year 6 pupils have had a temporary teacher who left just before the inspection. The lack of less regular music lessons for these pupils means that their progress has been restricted this year. Singing is a regular part of music learning; however, pupils' skills in this aspect are variable and not as strong as performing and composing.

- Regular school productions, enabling pupils to perform to different audiences, are appreciated and valued by those who take part. These help to build pupils' self-confidence and esteem.

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

The quality of teaching in music is satisfactory.

- Most teachers display enthusiasm for teaching music and have a secure understanding of music terminology which they use regularly in lessons. They ensure that all pupils are involved in music learning and are able to evaluate their work effectively. However, teachers' ability in providing appropriate challenge in lessons, especially for the more able, means that for these pupils particularly, overall progress is limited.
- Modelling of music learning is undertaken in lessons but this is not a regular feature and, at times, some lessons are overdirected by teachers. Similarly, pupils' initial responses are accepted too readily and not explored sufficiently to improve their musical ability and understanding.
- Group instrumental lessons are taught well with a clear focus on developing musical skills through demonstrations both by the teacher and the pupils.

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

The quality of the curriculum in music is satisfactory.

- Although all aspects of music learning are covered in lessons, teachers demonstrate varied levels of competency when adapting the commercial scheme of work to suit the needs of their pupils. Current planning does not, however, clearly indicate how pupils' skills will develop as they move through the school and consequently, they make uneven progress. This has been especially the case in Year 6 this year.
- Class music activities are supplemented by whole-school opportunities to create and perform music during the popular workshops with external providers. Pupils spoke enthusiastically of learning about music from other countries. However, these events are currently not linked to ongoing classroom work.
- No extra-curricular groups meet at present; some are planned for September. Senior leaders recognise that developing these is a priority for the school.

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management in music is broadly satisfactory.

- The subject leader is new to the role but is given effective support from senior leaders who show a good understanding of the issues that restrict pupils' progress. Despite being aware of some weaknesses in the overall

provision of music, robust monitoring of the quality of music teaching is recognised as a priority.

- Leaders acknowledge that, at present, the new assessment system being trialled enables teachers mainly to record that an activity has been completed. Active consideration is being given to amending this system so that identifying what pupils know and understand can be recorded.
- Pupils in Year 4 received whole-class violin lessons, as part of the 'Wider Opportunities' programme taught by the local authority. It is pleasing to note that, despite having to pay, the majority have continued having lessons after the initial period.

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

- ensuring that pupils make good or better progress by:
  - using assessment information to plan more challenging lessons which suit all pupils' differing musical abilities
  - enabling pupils to experiment with different sounds and make their own musical decisions
- ensuring that the music curriculum meets the needs of all pupils by:
  - establishing a clear progression of pupils' musical skills as they move through the school
  - making certain that additional music activities complement and develop classroom learning
- developing the leadership of the subject by:
  - monitoring regularly the quality of provision throughout the school and ensuring that the poor curriculum music experience of the current Year 6 pupils is not repeated
  - establishing music groups which meet regularly so that pupils can make music together
  - considering, in partnership with the local authority, how the whole-class instrumental programme can be developed.

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**