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Mrs L Roberts
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Roberts

Ofsted 2011–12 subject survey inspection programme: music

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 12 January 2012 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; a meeting with the head of Salford Music and Performing Arts Service (MAPAS) and a teacher from Music Unlimited; scrutiny of relevant documentation; evaluation of pupils' extra curricular and instrumental music making, observation of nine class lessons, two specialist music lessons and a movement and music session.

The overall effectiveness of music is satisfactory.

Achievement in music

Achievement in music is satisfactory.

- Information from observations and the school's own data show that most pupils make satisfactory progress in music and some make good progress, given their starting points. Although their attainment is generally lower than might be expected for their age, a small number of children demonstrate skills and abilities that are in line with national expectations, particularly in singing.
- Around one in five pupils participate in extra-curricular musical activities; however, these are all older pupils. All pupils are fully included and boys have a good take-up of musical activities. Each class receives specialist music teaching for one term each year, but pupils are not offered

additional individual instrumental or vocal tuition. A group of pupils made good progress during the short drumming programme they enjoyed as part of the Wider Opportunities initiative.

- Music makes a positive contribution to pupils' personal development. Pupils participate in thematic events, and music is used to support many aspects of the school's work.

Quality of teaching in music

The quality of teaching in music is satisfactory.

- Highly effective specialist teaching enables pupils to engage fully in music-making. During these sessions, a constant focus is placed on singing and/or playing for all pupils and assessment of pupils' responses leads to carefully chosen activities which are shaped as the lessons progresses to meet individual's needs.
- In other lessons led by class teachers, most adults sing confidently; in the best of these sessions, teachers ensure that all children have opportunities to play and/or sing. However, in other lessons, pupils too often have to wait for long periods while others have their turn. This limits musical engagement and progress.
- The school is aware that weaknesses exist in class teachers' and support assistants' knowledge and understanding of how pupils should progress musically. In these lessons, too much focus is on teacher direction, whole-class questioning and talking rather than giving pupils opportunities to demonstrate through music what they have understood. Consequently, opportunities are missed to assess individual pupil's achievements and move their learning on at a faster pace.

Quality of the curriculum in music

The quality of the curriculum in music is satisfactory.

- The curriculum has recently been redesigned and a new scheme of work commenced in September 2011. This curriculum meets all the requirements of the National Curriculum, including the musical use of information and communication technology. However, the planning of sequences of learning does not consistently and systematically build on pupils' existing skills and abilities and ensure individual's musical development.
- A highly effective partnership with Music Unlimited provides one term of high-quality specialist music teaching for each class and makes a significant contribution to the provision of music across the school.
- Music is used to enrich other areas of the school curriculum. For example, in a French lesson music was used effectively to start the lesson by getting all pupils to sing a 'bonjour' song. However, in other areas, aspects of pupils' musical progress are less well developed when lessons share a focus with other subjects.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in music

The effectiveness of leadership and management in music is satisfactory.

- The recently appointed subject coordinators, together with yourself, have a secure grasp of strengths and weakness in music. They share a clear vision and their self-evaluation is honest and accurate. Following the implementation of the newly designed scheme of work, the correct priorities have been identified and appropriate improvement plans are in place. However, these plans are at an early stage of implementation and any significant impact is not yet evident.
- The school has systems in place to monitor pupils' attainment and progress in music. The school has correctly identified that more accurate assessment of pupils' learning in music is required to enable leaders to use this data to set challenging and appropriate targets and identify gaps in pupils' progress.
- Strong partnerships with MAPAS have enabled the school to participate in musical events and festivals and to secure a wide range of visiting musicians, school groups and ensembles to enrich pupils' musical experiences. Highly effective specialist teaching from Music Unlimited makes a significant contribution to the school's music provision.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- developing the subject knowledge of all staff to ensure that musical progression is planned throughout sequences of learning across the school
- developing assessment for learning in music to ensure that individual pupils' skills and abilities are accurately assessed leading to personalised next steps in their learning.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop music in the school.

As 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. A copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

Adrian Guy
Her Majesty's Inspector