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Mrs J Walker
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Walker

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 14 and 15 March 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: interviews with staff and pupils; meetings with a panel of parents and a governor; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; observation of six class lessons, a guitar lesson provided through Cornwall Music and a drum lesson provided by a private tutor; and observation of rehearsals of the ocarina groups and Key Stage 1 choir.

The overall effectiveness of music is good.

Achievement in music

Achievement in music is good.

- When pupils start school, their knowledge and experience of music is broadly in line with expectations. By the end of Year 6, their musical skills and understanding are firmly in line with expectations, and this represents good progress. Pupils enjoy participating in class music lessons, and have a good awareness of music from other cultures.
- Pupils make better progress in Key Stage 1 and in the lower years of Key Stage 2. Their progress slows in Years 5 and 6, and this is a key reason why achievement is good rather than outstanding. Participation in additional tuition and extra-curricular musical activities is good, although considerably more girls than boys are involved.

- Vocal work is featured throughout the curriculum, in whole-school assemblies, and in the two school choirs. Singing is generally confident and assured, although older boys are less enthusiastic. Some two-part singing exists, but this aspect remains underdeveloped.

Quality of teaching in music

The quality of teaching in music is good.

- Some class music teaching is outstanding. For example, in a Year 4 lesson led by a class teacher, pupils quickly developed an excellent understanding of rhythmic patterns through a series of activities that built progressively through the use of chanted mnemonics, clapped rhythms and finally stave notations. The secret of this lesson's success was a clear focus on a single learning intention which was then gradually reinforced. When pupils broke off into small groups to create their own pieces, they had a secure understanding of the musical ideas which gave them great security and confidence.
- While other class teaching is characterised by equally sound classroom management, the quality of musical teaching is more variable. Resources are well chosen and prepared but, in the weaker examples, teachers depend too heavily on these resources and do not make enough use of their own modelling and listening skills. On occasions, too many objectives or activities are planned for lessons, with the result that the quality of pupils' learning is shallow.
- A particularly good feature of teaching throughout the school is the regular recording of pupils' work in lessons and the use of these recordings to help them understand how their work might be improved.

Quality of the curriculum in music

The quality of the curriculum in music is good.

- All classes have regular curriculum time for music each week. Class music work is very well planned through the International Primary Curriculum approach, and planning sets strong and appropriate expectations for pupils' musical development.
- A good range of additional instrumental tuition is provided. Ocarina groups for pupils of all ages and abilities provide good opportunities for performing in ensemble, as do the school choirs. However, these groups are dominated by girls; more could be done to engage boys, and scope exists for more instrumental ensemble opportunities for those who learn string, woodwind and percussion instruments in school.
- A reasonable and increasing collection of instruments is available for classroom use. However, pupils' progress and enjoyment of music would benefit from a wider range of tuned percussion, particularly bass instruments. It is also disadvantageous not to have a dedicated space for music; a bespoke music room would alleviate the need to move the

instruments from class to class in this large school, and would provide a better base for additional instrumental tuition.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in music

The effectiveness of leadership and management in music is outstanding.

- A remarkable depth of musical leadership exists at all levels. The music coordinator plans and manages the musical curriculum in great detail. One of the school's governors is a music teacher at a partner secondary school and takes an active involvement in supporting classroom and extra-curricular activities. As headteacher, you run the ocarina clubs and make excellent use of older pupils to help younger ones in these groups.
- The school takes an active and leading role in local initiatives and events, and is well informed about national developments in music education. The school is currently participating in the 'Minute of Listening' pilot.
- Curriculum planning and monitoring are very good. Additional tuition is managed well, and you have taken decisive action when the quality of externally provided tuition has not met your high expectations – for example, with the Wider Opportunities programme. Self-evaluation is accurate and incisive; the school knows exactly what needs to be done to move music provision from good to outstanding.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- reducing the gap between the proportions of boys and girls that participate in additional music activities, particularly in Years 5 and 6
- increasing the range of instruments for classroom work and creating a bespoke space for music education
- ensuring that all teaching has a relentless focus on the development of pupils' musical understanding, and that teachers make consistently good use of their modelling and listening skills.

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.

Yours sincerely

Mark Phillips
Her Majesty's Inspector