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Mrs J Davies
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Davies

Ofsted 2012–13 subject survey inspection programme: music

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 29 May 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; a meeting with the head of East Cheshire Music Service; scrutiny of relevant documentation; and observation of four class lessons and a 'Wider Opportunities' instrumental lesson, an assembly and an extra-curricular choir rehearsal.

The overall effectiveness of music is satisfactory.

Achievement in music

Achievement in music is satisfactory.

- From starting points broadly in line with those expected for their age and for some above, pupils make broadly satisfactory progress in music. However, their progress is variable across the school. Pupils' progress is more consistent when they receive regular, focused musical teaching. For example, pupils in Year 4 make stronger progress in learning a musical instrument as part of the 'Wider Opportunities' programme. This helps to ensure that pupils make satisfactory progress overall and achieve broadly average standards by the end of Key Stage 2.
- Pupils' singing by the time they leave the school is satisfactory. They demonstrate a secure grasp of pitch and appropriate tone although their singing, for example in assembly, lacks confidence. This is because singing is not systematically and regularly developed in all lessons.

- The overall proportion of pupils involved in additional instrumental tuition and extra-curricular activities is satisfactory. However, the proportion of pupils who continue with instrumental tuition following the 'Wider Opportunities' programme is low.
- Music is celebrated as part of the life of the school and contributes to pupils' well-developed social skills. The school celebrates pupils' musical achievements and some perform alongside, teachers, parents and carers, for example, in celebrating a Broadway-themed music night.

Quality of teaching in music

The quality of teaching in music is satisfactory.

- Lessons are well managed and organised and have opportunities for pupils to play instruments. For example, in a Year 2 lesson pupils worked cooperatively to choose sounds to describe a scary castle. However, these opportunities are often limited by too much verbal explanation rather than teachers and pupils demonstrating what they understand through music.
- Teachers work hard to provide music lessons that are interesting and linked to the topics they are studying. However, pupils' progress is often limited by teachers' lack of understanding of the progression and development of musical skills and knowledge. Although, teachers develop pupils' use of technical vocabulary appropriately, teachers' use of assessment is less secure. This is because it is based on what pupils can describe and explain verbally rather than evaluating pupils' musical attainment and progress.
- Pupils in Year 4 are taught a musical instrument as part of the 'Wider Opportunities' programme. Teachers demonstrate their expectations by modelling playing and singing, and pupils are able to respond on a range of brass and percussion instruments.

Quality of the curriculum in music

The quality of the curriculum in music is satisfactory.

- The schools' thematic curriculum is planned to ensure that pupils experience a range of musical styles, cultures, genres and periods. They sing songs and listen to music related to the topics they are studying. However, while planning for individual projects indicates the areas of musical experience and activity to be covered, it does not give sufficient guidance about the quality of outcomes expected.
- Although teachers use resources from a published music scheme, weaknesses exist in the systematic development of pupils' musical skills and knowledge as they move through the school. For example, curriculum plans for Years 5 and 6 do not build on the programme of instrumental lessons in Year 4.
- The school makes use of a range of partnerships to support musical provision in the school. In addition to the 'Wider Opportunities' programme in Year 4. The school has also worked with other primary schools and a

local secondary school to run a Choral project for Year 5 pupils. This has helped to develop pupils understanding of singing techniques. However, the school is aware that more is to be done in ensuring the equal participation of boys in extra curricular activities.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in music

The effectiveness of leadership and management in music is satisfactory.

- Music is highly regarded within the school and is used to develop and nurture the potential of all pupils, although there has been less focus on pupils' standards of achievement. The school is honest and secure in its self-evaluation and has identified that a structured programme to improve teachers' skills and knowledge is needed to raise standards further.
- Appropriate processes are in place for monitoring the effectiveness of provision but further training is required to enable teachers and leaders to accurately assess pupils' attainment and progress. The correct priorities for improvement have been identified and are to be planned into the next year's school improvement planning cycle in which music is a focus.
- The school actively seeks to work with partners and has engaged with a number of programmes to develop music within the school including the formation of the new 'Love Music Trust' music hub which is to be based in a local secondary school.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- improving the quality of curriculum planning to ensure:
 - the development of pupils' musical skills and knowledge is planned systematically as they move through the school
 - sufficient guidance is provided about the quality of outcomes expected to raise expectations and promote better progress
- developing the quality of teaching in music by accessing training to enable staff to:
 - develop their understanding of the progression and development of musical skills and knowledge
 - model their expectations musically
 - accurately assess pupils' musical attainment and progress.

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