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Mrs M Jones
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Jones

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 Monday 25 and Tuesday 26 June 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 Norfolk Music Service; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of five lessons and a singing assembly for all pupils.

The overall effectiveness of music is satisfactory.

Achievement in music

Achievement in music is satisfactory.

- Music activities include opportunities for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) to explore and create their own sounds using different materials. Together with singing games, this enables them to make expected progress.
- The development of pupils' singing skills is limited to practising in singing assemblies. Other aspects of music learning, for example, creating musical ideas and rhythmic work are covered in more detail during class lessons. This unevenness of coverage, together with inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, leads to pupils reaching below average standards overall. Progress is therefore only satisfactory by the end of Key Stage 2.

- Pupils welcome the opportunity to join with other pupils during regular music and arts festivals within the local area. This enables them to gain experience and understanding of different cultures and to work with professional artists. However, pupils regret the limited opportunities to belong to music clubs in school. In addition, very few pupils have individual instrumental lessons.

Quality of teaching in music

The quality of teaching in music is satisfactory

- Teachers have an interest in teaching music and generally have a secure understanding of music terminology which they and the pupils use regularly in lessons. Occasionally, opportunities are missed to ensure that pupils' understanding of musical language is checked, because lessons are too tightly planned and sometimes over-directed by teachers. In addition, too often lessons are aimed at the whole class and everyone does the same activity with some extension work for those who finish early. Although some pupils benefit from this approach, limited opportunities are provided for more musically able pupils to carry out higher-level tasks and make musical decisions for themselves. Consequently, their progress is restricted.
- Leaders recognise that insufficient audio recordings are made of pupils' work – either in the classroom so that pupils can understand how to improve their compositions, or of their involvement in concerts.
- Written assessment of pupils' work is carried out regularly. However it generally measures if an activity has been completed and whether gaps occur in provision rather than, as was seen clearly in the EYFS classes, identifying individuals' musical progress.

Quality of the curriculum in music

The quality of the curriculum in music is satisfactory.

- The school is developing a creative, thematic approach to curriculum planning, incorporating learning across a range of subjects. Additionally, staff also use a commercial scheme of work to provide extra material and resource ideas. Adapting this material and linking activities to the overall classroom theme is inconsistent. Guidance to ensure that all parts of the music curriculum are taught regularly and all abilities catered for is not clear enough.
- Singing is becoming a more regular part of class music lessons. However, the current planning format does not indicate clearly how pupils are to develop their musical skills and understanding as they move through the school.
- The school is not currently involved in whole-class instrumental tuition; however they plan to offer these lessons next term. A reasonable number of pupils belong to the school choir; however, boys are under-represented.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in music

The effectiveness of leadership and management in music is satisfactory.

- The subject leader provides individual support for staff and she is encouraged and supported by senior leaders in her work to improve music provision. Every appropriate effort is made to involve all pupils in additional music activities out of lesson time and the financial costs of these, and involvement in the national 'Wider Opportunities' programme, are considered carefully. Links with the local secondary school are under-developed; however connections with the county music service are more secure and enable teachers to benefit from workshops and training.
- Correct priorities for improvement have been identified. However, the current systems for gathering information about pupils' progress and improving the quality of teaching are under-developed.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- improving the progress made and the standards pupils reach by:
 - ensuring that all teachers provide music activities that are consistently challenging and meeting all pupils' differing needs
 - making sure that all teachers are confident to adapt published materials to plan lessons that include all aspects of music learning
 - using audio recordings regularly so that pupils can listen to their compositions, make musical decisions and thus raise the quality of their work
- reviewing the curriculum to ensure that all aspects of music provision have similar emphasis in lessons by:
 - ensuring that pupils' musical skills and understanding are developed consistently
 - incorporating an assessment system into lesson planning that records whether pupils have made progress and not just that they have completed the task set
- developing additional opportunities for more pupils, from all groups, to make music outside of lessons in different ensembles.

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

Marianne Young
Her Majesty's Inspector