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Ms P Murray
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Murray

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 10 July 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: meetings with staff, pupils; and the head of Barnsley Music Service; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; observation of six lessons, a 'Wider Opportunities' instrumental lesson, extra-curricular choir and 'School of Rock' rehearsals.

The overall effectiveness of music is good.

Achievement in music

Achievement in music is good.

- Children start school with very limited experience of music activities and songs. A variety of music games and regular access to well-structured music sessions enables them to explore different sounds well. When they leave at the end of Key Stage 2, overall, standards are below those expected. However, pupils move through the school, pupils make good progress because they start from a very low starting point.
- Pupils sing regularly. They show a good sense of rhythm but their intonation is not always secure. Pupils compose regularly as part of their whole-class instrumental lessons as part of the 'Wider Opportunities' initiative. Their pieces show a good understanding of how to structure

music and are notated in a variety of ways. However, composition is less well developed in Years 5 and 6 particularly.

- Although no pupils receive individual instrumental lessons, the provision that they receive through their class lessons and other enrichment activities, enables good progress in playing instruments. Ensembles meet regularly and all groups of pupils are represented. The 'School of Rock' group helps to engage boys. It is led by a teacher from a local secondary school which helps to promote links with the wider community. Additionally, members of the governing body are also active in helping with music events which, together with pupils' own enthusiasm, makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal and social development.

Quality of teaching in music

The quality of teaching in music is good.

- In the best lessons, progress is rapid because vocal and rhythmic work is complemented by and integrated with instrumental playing. Pupils are expected to improve their work and by internalising sounds they make accurate musical decisions. Musical sound plays an important part in these lessons with little verbal explanation needed from the teacher.
- Lessons have clear musical purposes and generally provide appropriate challenge for different ability groups. Musical vocabulary is used regularly and pupils use different ways to write down their music. At times, an over-complicated use of notation and resources used in lessons, combined with accepting pupils' first answers too readily, limits the progress made.
- Pupils are expected to evaluate their work regularly and consider if they have met their targets. Audio recordings are made to help pupils listen to their work and consider how improvements can be made.

Quality of the curriculum in music

The quality of the curriculum in music is good.

- The school's music curriculum is linked to other subjects within the overall theme for each class. Careful planning by all members of the arts team, which includes members of the governing body, ensures that pupils' musical skills, knowledge and understanding are developed regularly. Class lessons are also supplemented by additional music learning. For example, the whole-class instrumental tuition and class music lessons for pupils in Key Stage 1.
- Pupils experience a range of musical styles, cultures and genres, however, they do not use information and communication technology (ICT) to give them awareness of electronic sound sources as the school does not have any music programmes. Apart from this, music is well resourced within the school with pupils in each class having regular access to activities on the music table.
- Performing opportunities are a regular part of the music calendar. Strong links with staff from the music service, secondary schools and music

agencies support the music provision in the school and enable pupils to be able to take part in music and arts events out of school.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in music

The effectiveness of leadership and management in music is good.

- Leaders have a clear vision and understanding of how to give pupils the best possible music experiences. Enthusiasm is channelled effectively and through a robust and rigorous self-evaluation of both pupils and staff needs, appropriate training and additional support is provided. For example, teachers who have limited confidence teaching music are developing their musical skills by working with teachers from the music service and other music organisations. A record of each lesson is kept, which lists the actions throughout the lesson and not how this can be measured and how it impacts of pupils' progress.
- Secure partnerships have been established with Barnsley Music Services, the local secondary school and other music agencies so that pupils can develop their musical interests and abilities successfully. Leaders and members of the governing body know that more needs to be done, especially developing individual instrumental tuition. They are not complacent and have well-designed plans for further improvement.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- increasing the effectiveness of music teaching by:
 - giving sufficient regular attention to the development of composition, especially for older pupils
 - including ICT as part of music lessons
- developing teachers' understanding of how pupils learn musically by:
 - ensuring that teachers consider the way they teach music and how lessons impact on the progress pupils make and how they can be measured
- increasing, in partnership with Barnsley Music Service, the number of pupils involved in individual instrumental lessons.

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