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Mrs A Allen  
Headteacher  
Dawley Brook Primary School  
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Dear Mrs Allen

### **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 9 and 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: interviews with staff and pupils; a meeting with the head of Dudley Performing Arts; scrutiny of relevant documentation; and observation of three class lessons and a 'Wider Opportunities' whole-class instrumental lesson, an assembly and two extra-curricular music rehearsals.

The overall effectiveness of music is satisfactory.

#### **Achievement in music**

Achievement in music is satisfactory.

- Pupils make good progress in their singing. From starting points in line with those generally expected for their age, most pupils achieve expected outcomes by the time they leave the school in Year 6. A varied picture of pupils' achievement in music is evident across the school, despite some noticeable strengths. For example, pupils in Year 2 make good progress in learning to play the recorder and, by the time they leave Key Stage 1, most have a good grasp of basic technique, breathing and finger control.
- However, their progress in composing and playing a variety of tuned and untuned percussion instruments is inconsistent across the school. Consequently pupils' progress is satisfactory overall.

- The proportion of pupils learning a musical instrument and participating in extra-curricular activities is satisfactory; it is not better partly because the number of pupils who continue to learn an instrument following whole-class instrumental teaching is lower than might be expected. The proportion of boys who take up extra-curricular activities is also lower than might be expected.
- Music lessons make a positive contribution to pupils' person and social development; they cooperate well and show good levels of independence in activities. Music also helps to strengthen the school's links with the local community - for example, the school choir sing during the flower festival at a local church.

### **Quality of teaching in music**

The quality of teaching in music is satisfactory.

- Where teaching is most effective, singing and playing are modelled well by the teacher and pupils have opportunities to demonstrate what they have learned through music rather than verbal explanation. For example, in an extra-curricular ensemble, pupils took turns to improvise on their instruments during a piece played by the whole group. They showed secure grasp of rhythm and the teacher was able to hear and address errors in pitching. However, across the school the quality of teaching is inconsistent and other lessons have an over-emphasis on written activities about music and a lack of focus on singing and practical music-making.
- Although teachers plan lessons making sure pupils have a range of musical experiences, pupils' better progress is hampered by insufficient planning for musical progression and the systematic development of musical skills and understanding in lessons and across thematic cross-curricular topics.

### **Quality of the curriculum in music**

The quality of the curriculum in music is satisfactory.

- The school's thematic curriculum ensures satisfactory coverage of a range of genres, styles and periods including music from other countries. This supports the development of positive understanding of other cultures through thematic links with other curriculum areas. However, better provision is currently limited by weaker planning for the development of pupils' musical skills, knowledge and understanding as they progress through the school.
- Teachers make regular video and audio recordings of pupils' work; however, the musical use of information and communication technology (ICT) for creating and manipulating musical ideas is underdeveloped.
- Opportunities to learn a musical instrument are provided in partnership with Dudley Performing Arts. This aspect of curriculum provision has developed well over the past three years but, as yet, the skills, knowledge and understanding taught through this programme are not systematically woven into the school's scheme of work for music.

## **Effectiveness of leadership and management in music**

The effectiveness of leadership and management in music is satisfactory.

- Senior leaders demonstrate a strong commitment to music and ensure that sufficient time and funding are allocated, so that it remains a valued part of the broad and balanced curriculum provided for pupils.
- The subject leader has ensured that systems for monitoring the coverage of the music curriculum are in place. However, less consideration has been given to ensuring that planning provides musical progression and consistency across the school.
- Effective partnerships with Dudley Performing Arts enable the school to provide whole-class instrumental teaching on the recorder and violin for pupils in Years 2 and 3, as well as extra-curricular activities including a school band and a recorder ensemble.

### **Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:**

- ensuring that teachers' planning and the school's scheme of work provide clear expectations for pupils' musical progression and the development of their musical skills and understanding, including the musical use of ICT
- improving the consistency and quality of teaching to ensure:
  - appropriate focus on musical outcomes in all lessons
  - that good practice already evident within school is shared.

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**