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Mr N. Marlow  
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Dear Mr Marlow

Ofsted subject inspection programme – Music

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit with Marian Harker HMI on Monday 22 and Tuesday 23 January 2007 to look at work in music.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the subject, the visit had a particular focus on the extent to which every pupil was benefiting from your music provision. In particular, it sought to explore the links you may have developed with other schools and agencies, such as the local Music Service.

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 unless to highlight exceptional practice. In such circumstances the school would be contacted prior to publication to agree the exact wording. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included: interviews with staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of audio and video recordings, observation of four lessons and two singing assemblies, observation of the School Wind Band and two individual musical instrument lessons.

The overall effectiveness of music was judged to be good with some outstanding features particularly in the teaching of singing.

## Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in music are satisfactory with some good features.

- The quality of singing throughout the school is good. Pupils sing accurately in unison and in parts. Extra-curricular choirs also achieve good standards.
- Pupils could achieve even higher standards in music with more focused assessments, and by ensuring the curriculum fully meets the needs of all pupils, thus accelerating the pace of learning.
- The personal development of pupils is outstanding. Behaviour is exemplary and pupils obviously enjoy music, co-operate well, perform extensively in the community and play classroom instruments in a mature manner.
- Pupils achieve good instrumental standards with visiting instrumental teachers.

## Quality of teaching and learning in music

The quality of teaching is consistently good and often outstanding.

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and engage pupils well in a wide range of practical activities.
- The teaching of singing is outstanding. Teachers use a wide range of different activities to motivate and extend pupils' vocal skills.
- Assessment is satisfactory. There are formative and summative systems in place for the regular recording of pupils' achievements which inform teachers' planning. However, there is insufficient focus on what pupils need to do next to further improve.
- Good support is provided for pupils learning a musical instrument through regular individual lessons; by using their instruments in lessons to compose and perform; and through the wide range of opportunities in extra-curricular music groups. There are strong links with parents who are very supportive of the music provision.

## Quality of the music curriculum and extra-curricular provision

The quality of the music curriculum is satisfactory overall and extra-curricular provision is good.

- As well as regular music lessons with a specialist music teacher, pupils also have an additional forty-five minutes singing each week and this accounts for the higher standards of singing in the school.
- The current scheme of work hinders pupils' progress, as pupils are not given enough opportunity within each lesson to extend their learning.
- The range of extra-curricular provision is impressive. Large numbers of pupils take the opportunity to participate in a wide range of choirs,

bands, orchestras and other groups. Music is also featured in other areas of the school.

### Leadership and management of music

The leadership and management of music are satisfactory with some good features.

- The enthusiastic and dedicated specialist music teachers work extremely hard to provide an extensive range of musical opportunities. However, subject improvement plans and the slightly over-generous self-evaluation require a sharper focus on further raising standards.
- The school has a designated music room and three practice rooms that are well resourced and extensively used.

### Subject issues

#### Data Collection

- The collection of a range of background data about pupils' musical experiences is currently satisfactory. Informal procedures are in place, initially collected by class teachers.

#### Partnership Links

- Good links are made with the Barnet music service which provides seven instrumental teachers to support music provision, and uses the school extensively for evening and weekend music ensemble rehearsals. In addition, other community music groups use the facility extensively.
- Good links have also been made with other agencies, such as West End casting agencies which regularly use pupils as part of their productions.

#### Inclusion

- Inclusion is a strength of the school. All pupils are involved in music and all are given the opportunity to learn a musical instrument. All play recorders in Year 3 and all sing regularly to a high standard.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- reviewing and evaluating the music scheme of work to ensure that all pupils make even quicker progress
- sharpening assessment procedures so that pupils understand what they need to do next to further improve
- strengthening music subject leadership and management, especially improvement planning, in order to further raise standards.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop Music in the school.

As I explained in my previous letter, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be published on Ofsted's website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

In 6-12 months after the inspection visit, we would like to gather information on the impact of this inspection on the improvements in this subject in your school. To this end you may be contacted by telephone or sent a questionnaire to complete. We appreciate your co-operation in this evaluation.

Yours sincerely

Clive Kempton  
Her Majesty's Inspector