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Dear Mrs Jones

Ofsted subject inspection programme – Music

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on Tuesday 06 March 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 or other professional musicians, in order to improve continuity and increase opportunity for all your pupils.

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 yourself and the music subject leader, scrutiny of relevant documentation, discussion with a group of older pupils, analysis of pupils' work including audio and video examples of past work, observation of one flute lesson, four music curriculum lessons, a dance club, and an assembly.

The overall effectiveness of music was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are satisfactory with some good features.

- In the Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, achievement and standards are satisfactory overall.
- Standards in singing and extra-curricular instrumental work are good and supported well by the wide range of opportunities that the school provides.
- Personal development is good. All pupils adopt a very positive attitude to music, behave well and tangibly enjoy their music making. The ethos for music is strong throughout the school and shared by staff as well as pupils.

Quality of teaching and learning in music

The quality of teaching is good overall.

- Teachers plan for a good range of music activities within each lesson, including singing, instrumental work, listening and recording activities.
- Assessment is satisfactory and showing improvement. The school recognises that there needs to be more clarity about progression through the National Curriculum levels to enable teachers to measure pupils' progress even more effectively.
- There is good support for singing and instrumental work throughout the school through a wide range of performance opportunities in and out of school.
- Instrumental teaching from visiting instrumental teachers is good. They provide good role models, use their instruments well in lessons and ensure high performance standards.
- Although learning is good for most pupils, some are insufficiently challenged. There is a need for higher expectations and more opportunities for the most able pupils to extend their learning within curriculum lessons. The learning outcomes for each lesson are also not always clear or measurable.

Quality of the music curriculum and extra-curricular provision

The quality of the music curriculum is good.

- There are many opportunities in and out of the lessons for pupils to develop musical confidence and enhance their self esteem.
- There is a good breadth to the curriculum although teachers lack confidence in the teaching of composing.
- The extra-curricular provision is good. There are rich opportunities for pupils to perform to a range of audiences in school and in the local community. Joint Pyramid music activities with local schools enhance musical standards and involve a large number of pupils. The weekly music club is well attended and leads to regular planned musical performances.

- Music is embedded in the life of the school and features across the curriculum, for example in Literacy and French.

Leadership and management of music

Leadership and management of music are satisfactory.

- The committed music co-ordinator is constrained by her heavy management load of three subjects and her teaching role in this small school.
- Despite financial constraints, the music co-ordinator and other staff have attended music courses. She is aware of the need for further whole staff training to develop confidence and raise standards.
- The school has an accurate self-evaluation of its provision and areas for further development.

Subject issues

Data

The collection and use of music data is satisfactory. Currently, data collection is informal, but developing. Pupil questionnaires and annotated teacher planning provides some data for the music co-ordinator. Attendance at music clubs and at instrumental lessons is also monitored. No baseline testing is used in music although there are plans to identify pupils with particular musical talents earlier.

Partnerships

Partnerships are good. There are many opportunities to work with the local Pyramid of schools to celebrate musical achievement and provide a purpose for performing. Joint Pyramid orchestra sessions held in the summer term also raise standards. Partnerships with the local music service are now good. Visiting instrumental teachers also contribute to the instrumental standards achieved. Community links and musical opportunities at the local village church are also regular and well established.

Inclusion

Inclusion is good. All pupils are involved in singing activities on a regular basis. All Key Stage 2 pupils play the recorder in class music lessons. There is tangible evidence that music is deeply embedded within the school and across the curriculum. Music involves all pupils and all staff.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- challenging able musicians more within curriculum lessons and having higher expectations of musical outcomes for all pupils
- breaking down national curriculum assessment level descriptors into smaller steps so that all teachers recognise how to improve standards
- providing more opportunities for composing throughout the curriculum and more support for teachers in its delivery.

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.

Yours sincerely

Clive Kempton HMI
Her Majesty's Inspector