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Mrs Tara Collins-Bullock  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Collins-Bullock

Ofsted subject inspection programme – Music

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on Monday 05 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, the subject leader for music, and the chair of governors, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work including audio and video evidence, discussion with a group of pupils, and observation of three lessons and a music assembly.

The overall effectiveness of music was judged to be satisfactory.

## Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are satisfactory.

- Standards in the Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 are all satisfactory. The highest musical standards are achieved in instrumental work, especially by the pupils in Key Stage 2 who receive instrumental tuition. These pupils played to a securely satisfactory standard in simple parts differentiated well by the teacher.
- Singing is confident and a regular feature of school life. However, standards in composing are not as strong as those in performing or singing due to a lack of staff confidence and insufficient challenge for pupils.

## Quality of teaching and learning in music

The quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory with some good features.

- Teachers plan thoroughly for a wide range of different musical activities and allow pupils to consolidate their learning in small group work. Plenary sessions check for understanding. However, some activities insufficiently challenge pupils as teachers' expectations of musical outcomes are not high enough.
- Questioning strategies are developing although there is insufficient use of targeted questioning to ensure that all pupils understand the task and are making sufficient progress.
- Teaching assistants are well-deployed to support small group work.
- Assessment is regular and beginning to focus more on the National Curriculum levels of attainment.

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

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory.

- The music curriculum is broad for a small school, but there is not enough progression through the Key Stages. The scheme of work is also satisfactory and currently under review.
- Daily singing, annual shows, and musical contributions to the local community provide a range of performance opportunities.
- The few instrumental pupils in the school contribute well to the music curriculum in assembly and other annual events.
- The strong pyramid of local schools provides good opportunities for pupils to perform with a larger group of pupils.

## Leadership and management of music

Leadership and management of music are satisfactory.

- The role of the music co-ordinator is evolving and requires a stronger focus on raising standards and ensuring higher teacher expectations.
- The opportunities for continuing professional development on music have been limited to date due to other whole school priorities.
- Self-evaluation is accurate. The school has a perceptive view of the overall effectiveness of music and areas for further development.

## Subject issues

### Data

The collection and use of data concerning music is satisfactory. Data is kept for all instrumental pupils who play an instrument in and out of school. National Curriculum level descriptors are passed on to the local Pyramid Middle school, but not requested at other cross-border schools.

### Partnerships

Partnerships are good. There are strong links with the local Pyramid of schools that meet to celebrate pupils' music achievements through Pyramid Orchestra and other music events. These links support the school well and provided good opportunities for extending individual instrumental pupils and making music in a larger ensemble.

### Inclusion

Inclusion is good. All pupils in the school are actively involved in music making, enjoy singing and playing musical instruments and have the opportunity to learn an instrument, albeit a limited range.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- ensuring that all teachers have higher expectations of musical outcomes and all pupils are appropriately challenged
- strengthening subject leadership in music so that there is a focus on raising standards
- providing more music professional development opportunities for all staff.

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