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Mrs Thornes  
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Dear Mrs Thornes

Ofsted Subject Inspection Programme – Music

Thank you for your assistance and hospitality, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 27 and 28 February 2007. At the end of the inspection I fed back my judgements and this letter is to confirm my findings.

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 is benefiting from your music provision. It also explored the links you 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: discussions with members of staff, pupils and the chair of governors, scrutiny of relevant documentation and observation of lessons, a hymn practice and an extra-curricular activity.

The overall effectiveness of music was judged to be satisfactory.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are satisfactory overall.

- Pupils enjoy their music lessons and make satisfactory progress. The youngest children are beginning to develop a sense of pulse and understand how sounds can be changed. Pupils in Year 1 are learning how to make music in groups and are developing understanding of the musical concepts. However, they still have difficulty identifying high and low sounds. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 use musical vocabulary well but there was limited evidence of similar attainment in performing and composing.
- Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are making the most progress and use keyboards confidently when finding and performing melodies. The progress of these pupils is enhanced significantly through extra-curricular opportunities to make music in groups and to play the recorder.
- Pupils sing enthusiastically during hymn practice and enjoy taking part in whole school music events. However, musical skills would be improved further through more opportunity for pupils to learn instruments and play together in regular ensembles. Pupils expressed a wish for such experiences.

#### Quality of teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

- Teachers make excellent use of good generic teaching strategies in music lessons. Relationships are very positive and pupils are happy. Questioning is good and tasks are generally well structured and managed. However, teachers do not have sufficient subject knowledge to know how to help all pupils make as much musical progress as they could. For example, learning objectives tend to be too general and do not focus enough on specific musical skills and understanding. Pupils are also not clear what they need to do to improve their work further and achieve at a higher standard.
- Good strategies were also used in the recorder lesson with pupils being involved in selecting the melodies to be played. Pupils were sensibly asked to model the work for each other and good attention was given to some instrumental techniques. However, smaller steps were needed to help pupils progress towards playing two melodies together. For example, some pupils could have been given a simple repeated phrase to play while others performed the whole melody. Smaller steps were also needed in the hymn practice where pupils would have benefited from some warm-up exercises and from not starting with a hymn that began on a high note.

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

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

- While musical progress is limited by the depth of teachers' subject expertise there is good inclusion of music as part of the whole curriculum. All teachers teach music to their class. Music is seen as an integral part of

learning and celebrated as an enjoyable experience for both teachers and pupils; teachers welcome the opportunity to work with pupils in a different way.

- A published scheme is used effectively to ensure appropriate breadth and coverage. However, further adaptation is needed to ensure it meets the needs of all the pupils in the school.
- There is good involvement of pupils in whole school music events and in wider musical experiences such as visits to performances and workshops by the Mozart Players. However, the school is aware that there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to learn a musical instrument and take part in different extra-curricular activities. Appropriate attention is being given to finding ways to access the funds provided by the government to ensure all pupils have the opportunity to learn a musical instrument.

### Leadership and management of music

The leadership and management of music are satisfactory overall.

- The school is very supportive of the music provision. You provide good leadership ensuring that all teaching is consistently well planned, managed and evaluated. The school provides as good a provision for music as it could without specialist expertise. Teachers make a highly commendable effort to teach music as well as they can and this has resulted in the enjoyment shown by pupils. However, the school is very aware of the need for specialist support to increase pupils' progress and further maximise the contribution of music to the school.
- Intelligent use of a published scheme of work provides a good record of pupils' work although this information has yet to be used to improve planning and ensure work is matched to the different needs of pupils in each class.

### Subject issues

#### Data Collection

- The collection of information about pupils' musical learning and experiences is at an early stage of development.

#### Partnership Links

- Very few links have been made with others outside of the school and the local community.

#### Inclusion

- All pupils are included well in class lessons but there is insufficient opportunity for all to extend their skills through extra-curricular activities and instrumental tuition.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- developing the extra-curricular activities to meet the needs and interests of all pupils
- building on the high level of staff interest and commitment to music by finding ways to increase their music subject knowledge and expertise.

I very much hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop music in your 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

Anthony Knight  
Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools