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Mr J Loukes  
Headteacher  
Fleetville Junior School  
228 Hatfield Road  
St Albans  
Hertfordshire  
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Dear Mr Loukes

Ofsted subject inspection programme – Music

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 1-2 May 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 music subject leader and a group of Year 6 pupils; informal discussions with the chair of governors, local authority representative and the head of St Albans Music School; scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work including audio and video examples; observation of three lessons, a Year 5/6 singing assembly, two lessons by visiting instrumental teachers, and one after-school Year 7 steel pan club with past pupils.

The overall effectiveness of music was judged to be outstanding.

## Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are outstanding.

- Achievement in music is outstanding taking account of pupils' starting points. Standards are consistently good with some outstanding features, for example in the high quality of singing. Standards achieved by some of the instrumental pupils are outstanding.
- The performance standards of pupils within the taught curriculum are often outstanding, the composing standards are good, and the listening standards, related to the music of different times, places and cultures, are satisfactory.
- Standards in all extra-curricular ensembles are high and often motivated by the wide range of high profile events pupils are asked to perform at. These include performing locally and nationally with professional musicians and orchestras.
- Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Music contributes significantly to the development of their confidence and self-esteem.

## Quality of teaching and learning of music

The overall quality of teaching and learning is outstanding.

- The quality of teaching and learning in the taught curriculum are consistently at least good. Aspects of the instrumental teaching are outstanding.
- An outstanding feature of the teaching and learning in all musical activities in the school is the insistence on internalising sound – asking pupils to hear the sound in their heads, and the high expectations of musical outcomes embedded in the teaching methodology, especially instrumental teaching.
- All vocal and instrumental pupils receive consistently good support throughout the school. Individual support for those pupils identified as benefiting from instrumental tuition is outstanding.
- Assessment is satisfactory. Pupils are assessed at the end of each unit of work in relation to whether they achieve the expectation or achieve above or below the expectation. They are tracked when they leave the school and through good continued support they remain engaged with music.

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

The quality of the music curriculum is good with some outstanding features.

- The quality of the taught music curriculum is good. Commercial schemes of work are well supported by the music teacher's own innovative developments such as the use of unconventional sound sources.

- The taught curriculum is not yet outstanding as listening to music is not as well represented as performing and composing. Opportunities to listen to related music when performing and composing are missed.
- An outstanding feature of the music curriculum is the extensive range of extra-curricular ensembles; the numerous opportunities pupils have to perform; the richness of the visits to professional shows; and the involvement in high profile musical events.

### Leadership and management of music

The leadership and management of music are outstanding.

- The part-time music subject leader works tirelessly to support pupils and ensure they remain involved in music. A good example is the Year 7 Steel Pan group she runs after school for past pupils.
- Self-evaluation by the subject leader and the headteacher are accurate.
- Pupil questionnaires are a regular feature of departmental management and inform development planning. For example, family 'jamming sessions' were introduced into the extended schools programme as a result of pupils' request.

### Subject issues

#### Data

Data collection is currently satisfactory. Informal discussion with the local infant school identifies able instrumental pupils. Ability on entry to the junior school is judged informally during the initial weeks of the Year 3 curriculum. Detailed attendance data is kept for extra-curricular groups. Year 7 pupils are informally tracked when they leave the school and through good continued support they remain engaged with music.

#### Partnerships

Excellent partnerships have been established with the local music service through the nearby music centre. This allows pupils to be well supported both within school and outside school in the evenings and at weekends. Some good transition arrangements have also been established to allow some pupils to retain the same instrumental teacher on transfer to secondary school. Good partnerships have also been established with the local secondary school, an arts specialist college, where one of the secondary school teachers comes into the primary school each week to run a boys' choir.

## Inclusion

Inclusion is very strong. The Steel Pan project for all Year 6 pupils ensures that all pupils are given equal opportunity to learn a musical instrument. There is also impressive involvement of pupils in extra-curricular activities with, for example, 250 out of the 347 pupils on role playing musical instruments.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- raising the profile of the listening element of the curriculum by giving pupils more opportunities to listen to related music when performing and composing
- considering ways of refining the assessment of music in line with the best practice seen in other subjects in the school such as English.

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  
Her Majesty's Inspector