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Mrs Harrie Atkinson  
Headteacher  
Bevois Town Primary School  
Cedar Road  
Southampton  
SO14 6RU

Dear Mrs Atkinson

### Ofsted Subject Inspection Programme – Music

Thank you for your assistance and hospitality, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 11 July 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 and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation and observation of lessons, including the instrumental/vocal programme for all pupils in Year 3, two singing assemblies and brass lessons.

The overall effectiveness of music is good. The school has made much progress and shows good capacity for further improvement.

#### Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are good overall.

- Pupils enjoy music and benefit considerably from the music provision, particularly the extended instrumental/vocal programme in Years 3 and 4.

Significant progress has been made in enabling pupils to get involved in music making, especially for those who would not have had the opportunity in the past. Pupils' confidence, concentration and motivation have improved considerably through learning to play a musical instrument and perform to others.

- Pupils in Reception and Key Stage 1 make good progress from their starting points and achieve in line with national expectations. They are able to control and organise sounds with awareness of others in the group and perform together well. However, the standards of singing are not as high as many pupils are still developing their sense of pitch and their language skills.
- Progress in the instrumental programme in Years 3 and 4 is also good overall with some pupils making excellent progress. Standards are at least in line with national expectations and pupils are developing good instrumental skills. Good progress is also made in the instrumental lessons.
- Lack of stability in the teaching of pupils in Year 5 and less frequency of lessons in Year 6 has resulted in less progress being made by all pupils at the top end of Key Stage 2. However the increasing numbers of pupils involved in instrumental lessons continue to make good progress. The quality of singing also shows good improvement from Key Stage 1.

#### Quality of teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good.

- Relationships between teachers and pupils are always at least good. Pupils are rightly appreciative of the wide range of well taught instrumental opportunities. Lessons are managed well and tasks explained clearly.
- In the best lessons, pupils respond well to the high expectations set by the teachers. There is constant reinforcement of learning and work is revisited until clear improvement has been made. Pupils are helped to learn through demonstration and skilful direction while pupils are performing.
- However, not all tasks provide sufficient opportunity for pupils to develop and demonstrate higher standards. Pupils also do not always know what to do to provide a better response.
- The singing sessions engage the pupils well and ensure continued enjoyment. However, the quality of singing would benefit from using a few well chosen warm-up activities and from increasing the range of the higher notes through the session.

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

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

- Good use is made of a published scheme which teachers generally adapt as appropriate. The curriculum is extended effectively through the instrumental/vocal programme in Years 3 and 4 and additional

experiences for instrumentalists such as the recent Mela event. The singing assemblies are another important part of the provision.

- Increasing numbers of pupils take part in instrumental lessons and the school is aware of the need to find ways to ensure all can practise regularly and benefit from more opportunities to perform together in ensembles. There are good plans to start a school choir next term.
- While some creative work was seen in Year 1 more work is needed to make sure pupils have sufficient opportunity to develop their musical creativity in Key Stage 2.

### Leadership and management of music

The leadership and management of music are good with some excellent aspects.

- The support you and the Governing Body give music is excellent. There is excellent commitment to improving the life chances for pupils. The significant financial commitment to extending the instrumental programme is clearly having a major impact on the school and on the quality of education for all your pupils. This support has also had an impressive impact on individual pupils who have been helped to gain confidence and self-esteem, improving their work in work in music and in other subjects.
- Documentation is very thorough and helpful and reflects the attention given to music. The subject leader supports staff well and is developing good records such as the simple, but effective, information on songs sung in the singing assemblies. The school is aware that further work is needed on collecting and using information on pupils' musical progress and on making more recordings of pupils' work. The school recognises that the recording of pupils' work will help teachers and pupils develop greater awareness of expectations and of progress made.
- Class teachers enjoy teaching music and are applying good strategies used effectively in other subjects. Good support is given by the class teacher involved in the instrumental programme. However, for understandable reasons, provision for all pupils in the top end of the school has been less consistent. While pupils that chose to continue instrumental lessons in Years 5 and 6 have been able to develop their skills, this has not been the case for all pupils.

### Subject issues

#### Data Collection

- This is at an early stage of development.

## Partnership Links

- Very good links have been made with the Music Service and good partnerships are being developed between instrumental teachers and class teachers.
- The school has benefited from involvement with Creative Partnerships.

## Inclusion

- The school has given excellent attention to ensuring all pupils who wish to continue to play a musical instrument are able to do so. This has included taking considerable care over every individual pupil and extensive discussion with parents. The commendable decision to extend the programme beyond one year demonstrates clearly the depth of care and support for pupils' musical and personal development.
- The school is fully aware of the need to ensure all pupils continue to make progress in the upper school and all are given sufficient opportunities to reach higher standards in their music making.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- making sure pupils always know how to improve their work
- increasing information about pupils' musical progress through, for example, more recording of pupils' work
- ensuring all pupils continue to make progress in the upper school through, for example, more consistent provision and regular opportunities to perform together in ensembles.

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