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Mrs C Nolan-Burnitt
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Nolan-Burnitt

Ofsted Subject Inspection Programme – Music

Thank you for your assistance and hospitality and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on the 21 June 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 any links you have developed with other schools and agencies.

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 members of the governing body, scrutiny of relevant documentation and observation of a range of lessons, instrumental tuition and extra-curricular activities.

The overall effectiveness of music is satisfactory with some good elements and significant strengths particularly in instrumental activities.

Achievement and standards

Standards in music are broadly average and achievement is satisfactory.

- Overall progress in lessons is satisfactory and pupils reach broadly average standards. In some lessons progress is more rapid because of careful planning and effective challenge for all pupils. At times, progress is limited because planning is less clear and the work is too difficult for some pupils.
- Pupils involved in instrumental lessons and ensembles make good progress because of the high expectations set by their teachers during lessons and rehearsals.
- While singing is included regularly, pupils' attainment in this aspect is not as high as in the other aspects of the provision.
- Pupils enjoy music and talk enthusiastically about their involvement in musical activities. These events help pupils to develop their self-confidence and ability to perform to each other and wider audiences.

Quality of teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

- The best learning takes place when lessons are carefully planned with appropriate challenge for all pupils, especially for those who play instruments to a high standard. Musical skills and ideas are modelled confidently so that pupils know what is expected of them. Discussion is encouraged and pupils know how to describe and improve their compositions.
- In some lessons teachers use inappropriate resources, and do not provide a suitable response to inaccurate playing or encourage pupils to revisit their work and make improvements. These features, linked to pupils lacking a clear understanding of what is expected of them, limit the progress they make.
- Assessment is not used effectively in some lessons. Where it is used effectively learning improves. This is because teachers are evaluating regularly what pupils have learnt so they can set appropriate challenges for them.

Quality of the music curriculum and extra-curricular provision

The overall quality of the curriculum is satisfactory with significant strengths in extra-curricular and instrumental provision.

- The curriculum is based mainly on a published scheme. Some teachers evaluate and adapt it carefully so that lessons meet the needs, interests and abilities of pupils as appropriate. Currently there is little overall mapping of the curriculum to monitor how pupils' musical skills are developed in each year group.

- Resources are satisfactory but there is a need to update and replace some instruments. The links with a school in Uganda give good opportunities for music from Africa to be explored and contribute to pupils' understanding of music from other parts of the world. A computer program is used effectively by pupils in Year 6 to support music learning.
- About 40% of pupils are involved in ensembles and instrumental lessons in the school. The pupils perform in a range of venues and regularly take a significant part in activities organised by the community. There is a thriving band where pupils perform to a good standard.

Leadership and management of music

The leadership and management of music are satisfactory.

- It is clear that you, the subject leader and members of the governing body, value music and have encouraged and supported the development of instrumental lessons and ensembles. Parents provide overwhelming support for the many concerts and the instrumental work of the school.
- The subject leader has made a significant impact on the musical life of the school and a large number of pupils are now involved in ensembles and concerts. Despite these significant strengths in enrichment, music in the classroom is less effectively planned. There is not enough use of assessment to track pupils' progress and ensure that all are effectively challenged. This is especially needed for the more able pupils.
- Monitoring of the curriculum takes place but currently lacks sufficient rigour to provide a clear picture of how pupils' musical skills are being developed. The subject leader is aware that improvements are needed so that there is a clear overview of progression. There is good capacity for improvement.

Subject issues

Data Collection

- The assessment of pupils' musical attainment is a developing area for the school.

Partnership Links

- At present there are limited partnership working with the secondary school and the subject leader recognises the need for more effective links to be established.
- The school has not been involved in the instrumental/vocal programmes supported by the Standards Fund. However, funding has

now been received and the possibility of offering whole class tuition from September 2007 is being considered.

Inclusion

- There is curriculum provision for all pupils and frequent performances and concerts are held with many pupils involved. However, more able pupils are not always challenged sufficiently and the work is not always appropriate to pupils' different learning needs.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- ensuring clear musical challenge in lessons, for all pupils, to involve them in their learning and to raise achievement in all aspects of musical development
- developing a more robust and informative assessment system to monitor the progress made by individual pupils.

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

Marianne Young
Her Majesty's Inspector