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Mrs H Smith  
Headteacher  
Springvale Primary School  
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Dear Mrs Smith

Ofsted Subject Inspection Programme – Music

Thank you for your assistance and hospitality and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 16 October 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 and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation and recordings, observation of lessons and instrumental tuition.

The overall effectiveness of music was judged to be good. Music is an important subject within the school. The regular opportunities for all pupils to perform both in lessons and during other events contribute very effectively to increasing their confidence and raising their self-esteem.

## Achievement and Standards

Achievement and standards are good overall with areas of strength, particularly in performing.

- Pupils enjoy their music lessons and perform well together in small groups. They have a clear understanding of how to compose and play rhythmic and melodic phrases together. Pupils readily give reasons for their favourite pieces and styles of music using correct musical language.
- They are keen to perform and achieve broadly in line with national expectations by the end of each key stage. This is good progress given their attainment on entry to the school. Singing is a regular part of music lessons but there is insufficient attention, on occasions, towards improving pupils' posture, breathing and intonation.
- Children in the Foundation Stage enjoy a range of music activities. They use instruments well and recognise how sounds can be put together successfully.
- Almost a fifth of pupils have instrumental tuition within and outside of the school. They perform well on their instruments and enjoy taking part in whole school music events which regularly and impressively involve all pupils. Several pupils described with enthusiasm, how much they enjoy performing for their friends and families.

## Quality of teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good.

- All staff display good enthusiasm for the subject. Relationships between staff and pupils are very positive. Pupils are given the confidence to express their opinions and are helped to evaluate their work effectively.
- Lessons are planned carefully to include variety of activities which enable pupils to be creative, for instance when composing their own pieces of music. However, while musical skills are developed, the learning objectives are not always clear enough for pupils to recognise the learning focus of their work or to understand what they need to do to improve the quality of their work.
- There is good instrumental teaching which links aural development with rhythmic and melodic musical games. However, there is limited opportunity for pupils who learn instruments to use them during class music lessons.

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

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

- Pupils receive weekly music lessons which are taught either in their classrooms or the school hall. Although pupils can work in small groups in their classrooms, the school hall provides the space needed so that older pupils, in particular, can benefit from working and rehearsing without distractions from others working close by.
- The curriculum is based on a published scheme. The school is aware of the need to adapt this scheme more closely to the needs of each class and to ensure that pupils' musical skills are developed systematically. Some teachers play pieces of music and songs for their pupils to help them learn, for example, about aspects of history and geography.
- All Year 2 and 4 pupils are receiving singing lessons as part of the vocal/instrumental programmes funded by the Government. However, the singing techniques taught in these lessons are not being fully developed in other music lessons or during singing in assembly.
- The school has rightly identified the need to expand the current resources for music. At present there are no electronic instruments or computer programmes to give pupils a varied choice of sound sources.

## Leadership and management of music

The leadership and management of music are good.

- All members of the school community are very supportive of music and work hard to ensure that the subject permeates all aspects of school life. Events are planned specifically to extend pupils' musical horizons. Music is seen as very important to the development of the whole child. The involvement of all pupils in whole school music events is excellent.
- Monitoring of provision is undertaken and areas for improvement matched those identified by my visit. Good support is being given to help the subject leader begin to take over their role.
- Individual teachers plan their lessons effectively. However, there is insufficient tracking of pupils' progress.

Subject issues:

## Partnership Links

- Good links are made with Barnsley's Performing Arts Development Service (PADS) which provides instrumental teachers and involved pupils in local festivals. Teachers from PADS are leading the singing

programme for pupils in Years 2 and 4; they are supported by class teachers during these lessons.

- The school is aware that at present there are no links with the local secondary school and is exploring ways to develop them.

#### Inclusion

- The drive for inclusion is central to the philosophy of the school. All pupils are included well in class lessons and there is good opportunity for all to learn a musical instrument.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- identifying more clearly and precisely what pupils are expected to learn, as opposed to do, in lessons and making sure they know how to improve their work
- ensuring that the singing techniques developed in the singing programme are applied and reinforced in music lessons and assemblies
- adapting the scheme of work so that pupils' musical skills are developed systematically.

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

