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07 February 2008

Mr S Turner
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Dear Mr Turner

Ofsted Subject Inspection Programme – Music

Thank you for your assistance and hospitality and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on the 24 January 2008. 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 observation of lessons and extra-curricular activities.

The overall effectiveness of music is satisfactory. While the school recognises that more needs to be done to improve provision, especially in the classroom, the regular opportunities for pupils to perform are a key factor in raising their confidence and self-esteem.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in music are satisfactory.

- Pupils are keen to perform and achieve broadly in line with national expectations by the end of Year 6. This is satisfactory progress given their attainment on entry to the school.
- Some pupils readily give reasons for their favourite pieces and styles of music using appropriate musical vocabulary. Singing is a regular part of music lessons but sufficient attention is not always given to improving pupils' posture, breathing and intonation. Composing is present in lessons but pupils' work generally lacks creativity and the development of musical ideas.
- Although only a small number of pupils have instrumental tuition within and outside of school, a larger number have the opportunity to perform in school music events and larger concerts at different venues. Several pupils described with enthusiasm how much they enjoy performing to their friends and families and how proud they are of their achievements.

Quality of teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

- All staff display good enthusiasm and interest for the subject. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive. Pupils are well aware of classroom routines and their teachers' expectations when using musical instruments.
- When teaching challenges and enables the pupils to develop their musical skills systematically, then progress is often good. For example, pupils in a Year 3 class enjoyed learning how to add rhythm patterns to a Caribbean folk song using a variety of un-tuned and body percussion. Skills were rehearsed regularly during the lesson and pupils were taught how to evaluate their work.
- However progress is less when tasks are too complex, too numerous or when the purpose of learning is not explained thoroughly. In these circumstances, some pupils become disheartened and no longer engaged in learning.

Quality of the music curriculum and extra-curricular provision

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

- 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 taught and developed more

systematically. At present there is no clear overview to make certain that all aspects of the music curriculum are taught progressively.

- The use of music in other subjects helps to broaden pupils' musical horizons. The school makes every effort to encourage and enable many pupils to take part in festivals, concerts and visits both within school and the local community.
- The school has rightly identified the need to expand the current resources for music both for pupils to use in lessons and teaching materials for staff.

Leadership and management of music

The leadership and management of music are satisfactory.

- The recent audit of music provision has identified appropriate key areas where provision needs to be improved. These are all clearly reflected in the action plan for the subject. You and the subject co-ordinator have an honest and realistic understanding of the priorities for action.
- Assessment is not a consistent part of learning and as a result it not possible to track easily an individual pupil's progress. Some informal identification of pupils' musical potential is taking place so that they can be offered the chance to learn instruments or take part in enrichment activities.
- The school is aware of the vocal/instrumental programmes funded by the Government and hope to take part as soon as possible.

Subject issues:

Partnerships

- There are no partnerships being developed at the moment.

Inclusion

- The school is aware that there is insufficient data about pupils' musical progress. This means that it is not possible to easily identify pupils who would benefit most from support or from extension.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- adapting the scheme of work to ensure that pupils' musical skills are developed systematically
- developing and implementing a system of recording and assessing pupils' musical progress and using this information in lesson planning
- giving pupils more opportunities to compose music and develop their musical creativity.

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

