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Mrs M Taylor
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Taylor

Ofsted Subject Inspection Programme – Music

Thank you for your assistance and hospitality and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on the 05 March 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, hymn practice and extra-curricular activities.

The overall effectiveness of music is good. Music is an important subject in the curriculum and does much to support the overall ethos of the school. Pupils enjoy taking part in a range of festivals and music activities in the locality.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in music are good.

- Pupils make good progress overall and achieve broadly in line with national expectations at the end of Year 6. Their ability to sing a variety of songs, usually unaccompanied, is impressive. Pupils have good oral skills which enable them to describe and talk about music very well. Many are able to read music notation and use Italian terms when, for example, explaining whether a piece is fast or slow. The school is aware that pupils' composition skills are not as well developed.
- Children in the Foundation Stage enjoy a range of music activities. Activities are planned well and progress is good. Children use instruments carefully and recognise how sounds can be put together.
- Pupils enjoy their music lessons and musical experiences, especially the opportunity to take part in the regular concerts, productions and festivals.

Quality of teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good.

- All staff display enthusiasm and interest for the subject. Teachers generally have good subject knowledge and share this with their pupils. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive. Pupils are well aware of classroom routines and their teacher's expectations when using musical instruments.
- Lessons are generally planned well and teachers explain what pupils are going to learn. This helps them understand what they are expected to do. Occasionally, tasks are not precise enough and teachers try and do too much in a lesson. As a result, pupils do not have long enough to reflect on their work and make improvements. There are also limited opportunities for pupils to learn about, and use, different ways of notating music.
- In the most effective lessons, progress is rapid because expectations are high and teaching enables the pupils to develop their musical skills systematically.

Quality of the music curriculum and extra-curricular provision

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

- Music lessons are enriched by workshops, festivals and taking pupils to concerts. Although involved previously, the school was not successful this year in its bid to be part of the instrumental programme funded by the government. Nevertheless, building on the success of their prior

involvement, all pupils in Years 3 and 4 have recorder lessons provided by the school.

- A commercial scheme of work is used by teachers. The school is aware of the need to monitor more closely how all teachers use this scheme in their lessons and also to give teachers more guidance about teaching composition.
- There is a limited number of ensembles. However a flourishing choir enjoys being able to take part in concerts and workshops organised by the local secondary school. They also perform regularly in the locality and take part in regional and national festivals. These opportunities introduce pupils to a wider range of musical styles and cultures and also contribute significantly to their personal and social development.

Leadership and management of music

The leadership and management of music are good.

- The subject leader, supported by the senior managers, works hard to promote music and to provide the best possible high quality workshops for all pupils. Music is a very important part of the life of the school and to the development of the whole child. Regular public performances enable parents and carers to appreciate and value their children's efforts and musical experiences.
- Monitoring of provision is undertaken effectively. There is a good understanding of how provision can be improved further. The school is sensibly investigating ways to support staff who find teaching music more challenging.
- Some identification of pupils' musical ability and progress is undertaken but it is not done consistently. As a result, it is not easy to track an individual pupil's progress.

Subject issues:

Partnerships

- Well-established partnerships with the local secondary school enable pupils to take part in a range of enrichment workshops and concerts.

Inclusion

- Every opportunity is taken to ensure all pupils have the chance to take part in enrichment activities.
- The school collects information about pupils' musical interests and involvement in instrumental lessons. However the information about their progress is less developed.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- giving pupils more opportunities to create their own pieces of music by raising the profile of the composing element of the curriculum
- varying the ways in which pupils read and notate their music
- collecting more regular information about pupils' musical achievement to ensure all make good progress.

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