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02 June 2008

Mr C Harrington
Acting Headteacher
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Roehampton Lane
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Dear Mr Harrington

Ofsted Subject Inspection Programme – Music

Thank you for your assistance and hospitality, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 21 May 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 an assembly.

The overall effectiveness of music is good. The strategic use of the subject leader working alongside class teachers provides good quality teaching and learning experiences for all pupils. They make good progress in lessons and attain broadly in line with national expectations from relatively low starting points. Pupils are well motivated and music makes a good contribution to developing their self-esteem and confidence.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in music are good.

- Children in the nursery sing confidently and explore different sounds made by musical instruments. They select and use sounds to represent characters in songs and stories. They respond well in music sessions and make good progress from starting points that are generally low.
- Pupils from Reception to Year 6 also make good progress in music lessons. Older pupils attain broadly in line with national expectations. Many pupils in Year 1 achieve well and attain standards similar to those expected for the end of Year 2.
- Pupils sing tunefully with good tone quality. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 confidently maintain a regular beat and many also accurately play rhythmic patterns when accompanying their singing. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 improvise and accurately perform rhythmic patterns as accompaniments to songs and playground games.
- Relatively few pupils receive instrumental lessons although good numbers are involved in extra-curricular activities such as the choir and recorder club. All pupils are involved in public performances.
- Pupils' personal development in music is good. They cooperate and collaborate well with each other, both in whole class and small group work. Pupils value their music lessons and appreciate the developments that have taken place this year. They enjoy their music lessons and feel that they are making progress.

Quality of teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good.

- The school has introduced a new strategy for teaching music this year. All classes are taught by the subject leader, who is a specialist. Class teachers and learning support assistants are actively involved in planning and teaching the class alongside the subject leader. As a result they are developing their confidence and understanding of effective strategies for teaching music.
- The subject leader's very good subject knowledge and classroom expertise are used effectively to help pupils and other adults. Positive relationships and good collaboration have established a climate where pupils are keen to learn.
- Lessons consistently focus on involving pupils in active music making. This ensures that pupils listen carefully and learn through being involved in a practical way.
- Lessons have a clear focus on the musical aspects that pupils are intended to learn. However, these are not always defined sufficiently precisely in planning or shared clearly enough with pupils. In many cases, learning objectives describe what pupils will do, rather than what they are intended to learn.

- The move to ensure good quality teaching for all pupils is a key element of the school's inclusive approach to music. As a result of this development, the curriculum is also adapted well to meet the needs of all pupils.
- The school collects and makes good use of information about pupils' progress in lessons when planning subsequent work.

Quality of the music curriculum and extra-curricular provision

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

- The curriculum, which is based on a published scheme is adapted well to match the needs of all pupils. The school recognises that further development and modification of the curriculum will be necessary as younger pupils move through the school, having attained progressively higher standards.
- The curriculum is enhanced by workshops with professional musicians, visits to concerts and a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities.
- The school has identified that it needs to expand the range of opportunities for pupils beyond the classroom. As a first stage it has agreed with the Local Authority music service that, from next September, all pupils in Year 4 will receive class-based instrumental teaching. There is scope to extend the breadth and range of extra-curricular activities available to pupils.

Leadership and management of music

The leadership and management of music are good.

- The school's self evaluation identified that its provision for music needed to be improved. Its response has been to implement specialist teaching for all pupils in the main school, allied to a major programme of professional development for all staff. This initiative is already having a significant impact. All pupils now receive good provision within the curriculum and satisfactory provision beyond the curriculum. This action is evidence of the school's clear vision for music and a determination to ensure that all pupils benefit.
- Further developments, including whole class instrumental teaching, are planned for the next school year.
- The school recognises, however, that it needs to analyse and evaluate all of the music opportunities it offers. It has identified that extra-curricular activities could be further developed to broaden the stylistic range offered.

Subject issues:

Partnership Links

- The school has a good ongoing partnership with the nearby Roehampton University. This is of great benefit both to the school and its pupils as well as to the students from the university. Other partnerships include those with the parish church where pupils from the school form a significant proportion of the choir. Links with the local authority music service are now developing well and are beginning to impact on the quality of provision for pupils.
- The school recognises that there is scope to develop further its links with secondary schools.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- developing and adapting the curriculum as younger pupils progress through the school
- ensuring that learning objectives for lessons are simple, clear and precise
- evaluating the range of extra-curricular activities to ensure that they provide extension opportunities for all 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

David Williams
Additional Inspector