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Miss J Lane  
Headteacher  
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Dear Miss Lane

### Ofsted Subject Inspection Programme – Music

Thank you for your assistance and hospitality and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 20 June 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: observation of lessons, an assembly and recorder club. Discussions were held with members of staff and pupils and relevant documentation was scrutinised.

The overall effectiveness of music is good with some outstanding features. The curriculum is exceptionally well planned to match pupils' needs. The school takes every opportunity to introduce and involve all pupils in a wide variety of musical activities and events.

These contribute significantly to their personal and social development. Music is seen as an important subject in the school and is valued by all staff.

## Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in music are good.

- Standards overall are broadly in line with national expectations and pupils' achievement is good. Some pupils make very good progress in lessons when work is carefully planned and their teachers' expectations are high.
- Pupils can successfully create pieces of music using percussion instruments or computer programs. Their behaviour in music lessons is exemplary. They cooperate well with each other and are considerate when offering suggestions for improvements to their peers.
- Children in the Foundation Stage enjoy listening to different pieces of music, using instruments and singing well known songs. They respond well to directions given by their teachers and other adults.
- Music is embedded across the whole school and used to promote and develop pupils' social, emotional and behavioural skills. Pupils are confident and keen to 'have a go' and perform in front of their peers. The regular concerts have developed good links between the school and the local community and as a result parents are becoming more supportive of music and appreciative of their children's successes.

## Quality of teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good.

- Pupils are taught how to recognise different musical styles, and links are made successfully between music and other subjects. Pupils are encouraged to express their opinions and describe their work. Occasionally the teacher takes too long explaining the task and gives limited time for pupils to refine, reflect and improve their work.
- The best teaching has a clear focus on the musical skill that pupils are expected to improve and develop during the lesson. For example, in one outstanding lesson, the teacher led pupils through a sequence of linked musical games and songs. Questioning was helpful and the unobtrusive help given by the teaching assistant ensured that all pupils were involved and made very good progress. This lesson had been planned very well because the teacher had made excellent use of assessment information and knew that pupils needed to improve their performance skills and rhythmic work.
- While learning is generally well planned, at times some lessons do not provide additional challenge for the more able pupils.
- All staff demonstrate good enthusiasm towards music. Working relationships are good.

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

The overall quality of the curriculum and extra-curricular provision are outstanding.

- The music curriculum has been developed successfully using a variety of published resources so that it meets the needs, abilities and interests of pupils. Teachers have a clear understanding of musical progression which is important when they are teaching classes with pupils of different ages. Learning is consolidated and linked to other curriculum areas when appropriate. An example of this is when Year 6 pupils linked their learning in class to a pupil's journey to Australia and explored blues music and the slave trade.
- Very good links are made between music and other arts subjects. Pupils have regular opportunities to perform to each other in school and to other audiences in the local community. Pupils spoke very enthusiastically about how much they had enjoyed taking part in the school production of 'Joseph'.
- The school has good plans to develop more music clubs and to increase the number of pupils learning instruments. You have already identified those who are interested in having guitar lessons.

## Leadership and management of music

The leadership and management of music are good.

- Music has a high profile within the school and staff share your enthusiasm and interest in the subject. Events are planned specifically to extend pupils' musical horizons and for them to mix socially and work with older pupils and adults. Your commitment to the value of the arts within education is evident around the school in the various displays celebrating musical events and individual pupils' achievements.
- Pupils' progress is tracked rigorously through a comprehensive and informative assessment system. As a result, teachers are aware of their pupils' abilities and weaker areas are clearly identified. The school agrees however, that at times, more challenge should be given to the more able pupils.

Subject issues:

## Partnership Links

- Strong links have been established with other schools through a federation of small schools and also a 'family cluster' which includes pupils from secondary schools. Regular workshops take place leading to performances at other schools and other venues. This is despite the significant barrier caused by transport costs.

- Other Creative Arts Days take place mainly with the family cluster group. These introduce pupils to a range of different art forms as well as music.
- The school received funding last year as part of the instrumental and/or vocal programmes funded by the Government. It has not received any funding this year.

### Inclusion

- Music provision and involvement is for all pupils. The school is determined to increase the numbers of pupils, especially boys, learning instruments and is actively working to identify their particular musical interests.
- The school makes every effort to ensure that the projects are suitable for pupils of different ages.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- increasing the range of music clubs and the numbers of pupils involved in music lessons
- ensuring that more able pupils are always challenged sufficiently in lessons.

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 of Schools