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Mr S W Hayter  
Headteacher  
Alfred Salter Primary School  
Quebec Way  
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Dear Mr Hayter

### Ofsted Subject Inspection Programme – Music

Thank you for your assistance and hospitality, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 19 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 extra-curricular activities.

The overall effectiveness of music is outstanding. Pupils' achievement is outstanding and music is central to the life of the school. The regular opportunities for all pupils to take part in musical activities in and beyond the classroom make a significant contribution to developing their self-esteem and confidence.

## Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in music are outstanding.

- Children in the Nursery confidently take part in a wide range of activities including singing and playing instruments. They respond well to different musical challenges, both individually and as a whole class. They make good progress from starting points that are generally low.
- Pupils continue to make good progress throughout the school. By Year 6, standards are at least in line with national expectations and for many pupils are higher than those expected nationally.
- Pupils have good listening skills which they use well, for example to help improve the quality of their performing. Pupils in Year 3 sang part songs accurately and musically, while pupils in Year 5 played complex Samba rhythms confidently and with a sense of style.
- Many pupils take part in instrumental lessons and extra-curricular activities, and all are involved in public performances.
- Pupils' personal development in music is outstanding. They cooperate and collaborate well with each other and have mature attitudes to their music making. They speak highly of music and appreciate the significant contribution it is making to their development. Pupils work in a positive atmosphere where they gain the confidence to perform individually to their peers.

## Quality of teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. It is never less than satisfactory and some is outstanding.

- Teachers use their very good subject knowledge effectively to select repertoire and activities that engage and enthuse pupils. Positive relationships have created a climate where pupils want to learn.
- Teaching consistently focuses on involving pupils in active music-making. The emphasis on an aural approach ensures that pupils listen carefully and make musical decisions based on what they hear.
- Teachers are clear about what they want pupils to learn, as opposed to do, although this is not always identified clearly in planning or shared enough with pupils. On a few occasions, therefore, pupils are not helped sufficiently to understand how they can improve the quality of their work.
- Teachers make ongoing assessments of pupils' achievements and use this information to adapt their teaching during lessons. However, assessment is not linked directly to National Curriculum levels and opportunities to compare and celebrate achievements against national benchmarks are lost.

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

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

- The school has a very wide range of resources and instruments from many different countries and cultures. This range enables the school to provide a very broad curriculum which interests and engages pupils.
- The curriculum is adapted very well to match the needs of all pupils and to extend their musical achievements. For example, pupils in Year 3 listened carefully and responded musically when challenged to take part in complex part-singing. Children with learning difficulties and disabilities are very well supported with activities that are both approachable and challenging. All pupils in Year 5 take part in Samba ensembles where they develop very good rhythmic control.
- The curriculum is also enhanced by a very good range of extra-curricular activities, workshops with professional musicians and visits to concerts. A significant proportion of pupils benefit from these activities.
- The school makes good use of information and communication technology (ICT) in music to record sounds. Following recent improvements to its ICT resources, the school has correctly identified the need to develop this further, especially to enable pupils to use ICT creatively when changing and combining sounds.

## Leadership and management of music

The leadership and management of music are outstanding.

- The school places great significance on the importance of music and the arts in general. All pupils receive high quality provision within the curriculum and most benefit from further opportunities beyond the school day. The school funds a wide range of extended opportunities, including instrumental teaching, and no charges are made to parents.
- The school caters well for all pupils. For example it provides very good opportunities to develop and extend more able musicians. It also ensures that pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, as well as other disadvantages, are given appropriate support and opportunities to develop their musical skills.
- There is a very clear vision for music and drive to develop even further the range and variety of opportunities available for all pupils.
- Visiting specialists enhance the quality of provision and bring valuable expertise. The school has recognised that it could further improve these enhancements, through, for example, team teaching in large extra-curricular activities, and through providing more professional development for these colleagues.

Subject issues:

#### Partnership Links

- The school has many well-developed partnerships with external organisations, including professional musicians and other arts bodies. These play a valued part in extending opportunities and experiences for pupils. Pupils who had been involved in some of these opportunities spoke very warmly about them.
- The school recognises that there is scope to develop further its links with secondary schools.
- The school effectively uses funding from the Government's instrumental and vocal programmes initiative to build on its existing provision by establishing further opportunities for all pupils.

#### Inclusion

- The school's approach to music is totally inclusive. The curriculum is adapted well to meet the needs of all pupils. Significant numbers of pupils are involved in musical activities and all pupils are actively encouraged to take part in the wide range of extra-curricular activities.
- The school collects and makes good use of information about pupils' musical interests and involvement in musical activities. Information about their musical progress is also collected and recorded and used to ensure that work is matched to the needs of individuals.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- linking assessments of pupils' work more directly to National Curriculum levels in order to compare and celebrate achievements against national benchmarks
- developing the use of ICT in Key Stage 2.

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