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11 November 2008

Mrs C Hind  
Headteacher  
St Patrick's Primary School  
Littledale Avenue  
Heysham  
Morecombe  
Lancashire  
LA3 2ER

Dear Mrs Hind

### Ofsted Subject Inspection Programme – Music

Thank you for your assistance and hospitality and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on the 23 October 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, observation of lessons and a hymn practice for Key Stage 2 pupils.

The overall effectiveness of music is good. Music is an important subject in the school and is valued by all staff. The support the school gives to music is rightfully recognised by the Artsmark Silver award.

### Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in music are good overall.

- Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress. They have a secure understanding of traditional songs and enjoy a well chosen range of music activities.
- Progress in Key Stage 1 is good overall, despite standards at the end of Year 2 being slightly below expectations. Pupils are developing a secure understanding of rhythm and are able to maintain their own part within a group composition.
- Progress in Key Stage 2 continues to be good overall and pupils reach standards which are broadly average. Most pupils make better progress in playing instruments and singing than in creating musical ideas. You have already identified that this is an area which needs further work and more opportunities to develop this aspect of music learning are planned.
- Singing is undertaken enthusiastically by most pupils. Skills are taught regularly in lessons and during hymn practices which enables pupils to understand how to breathe properly and pitch notes accurately.
- Pupils enjoy music and talk enthusiastically about their involvement in musical activities. They behave well in lessons and when moving instruments between classrooms.

### Quality of teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good.

- Most teachers demonstrate good enthusiasm for music and make lessons interesting for the pupils. They model activities well so that pupils are clear what they are being asked to do and to complete in music lessons.
- Pupils make best progress when lessons are planned carefully and there is effective challenge for all pupils, however in a few lessons teachers do not always provide additional challenge for the more able pupils.
- Peer assessment is undertaken regularly so that pupils have the confidence to comment on each others' work and identify where improvements can be made.
- Pupils usually do their best and are keen to do well, their behaviour is good and working relationships are positive.

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

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

- The school recognised that the previous curriculum was not meeting the needs of all pupils and has introduced a new music curriculum this term. While staff are becoming more confident in planning their lessons, you rightly realise that more work is needed to ensure that all the required elements are taught regularly and that pupils' musical skills are developed systematically.

- Although a third of all pupils sing in the choir, only a small number receive instrumental lessons. The school is continuing to find ways of increasing this number. Regular concerts where pupils join with other schools are enjoyed and give pupils the chance to perform in different venues.

## Leadership and management of music

The leadership and management of music are good.

- The organisation of music is good and it is an important subject in the school. The annual audit of music provision highlighted areas where improvement is still needed and appropriate priorities have been identified.
- The clear procedures which guide staff who monitor music provision means that all staff are aware what is being checked. Identification of pupils' progress takes place. However the school is aware that this system needs to be refined and simplified further so that the tracking of pupils' progress is more effective and clearly understood by all teachers.
- Teachers benefit from, and improve their subject knowledge, by working alongside the subject leader during class music lessons.

## Subject issues:

### Partnership Links

- The school's strong cluster arrangements with primary and secondary Catholic schools enable pupils to perform together at local venues in the community.
- Satisfactory links have been developed with the music service.

### Inclusion

- Inclusion of all learners is important to the school. All arts subjects are valued and, as a result, all pupils are involved in the annual productions. However, despite all the current Year 6 pupils being involved in whole school instrumental lessons two years ago, cost implications are preventing some pupils from continuing to learn instruments in school. The school is actively exploring ways to overcome this barrier.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- ensuring that more able pupils are always challenged sufficiently in lessons
- simplifying assessment arrangements so that teachers and pupils know how well they are doing in lessons

- refining the new scheme of work and monitoring lessons to ensure that all the required elements are taught regularly and that pupils' musical skills are developed systematically.

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