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Mr P Rose  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Rose

### Ofsted Subject Inspection Programme – Music

Thank you for your assistance and hospitality, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on the 30 April 2009. 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 the 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.

While the overall effectiveness of music is satisfactory overall, the school has made significant progress and is poised for further development as a result of the skilful management, and effective use, of partnerships with the local music service and the national initiative Sing-Up. Singing is rightly at the heart of the school's music provision and all pupils in Year 3 benefit from learning an instrument as part of the Wider Opportunities programme.

## Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in music are satisfactory with a particular strength in the quality of singing.

- Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. They enjoy using their voices in different ways and show increasing awareness and control of pitch and sense of pulse. Their musical vocabulary is developing well.
- Progress in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory overall as while some aspects such as singing are being developed effectively there is not enough opportunity for pupils to develop their creativity in music. Nevertheless, pupils really enjoy music and show a high level of ability to evaluate the performances of others.
- Pupils also enjoy learning to play instruments in Year 3 and more pupils now have instrumental lessons. However, the school is fully aware of the need to extend these lessons and increase extra-curricular opportunities. There are good plans to start a school choir which is needed urgently to maximise the greatly increased enthusiasm of pupils towards singing.
- The social development of pupils through the joint Year 3 and Year 5 singing session was outstanding. The development of 'Buddies' between these two classes was greatly enhanced through getting mixed aged pairs to teach each other different songs.

## Quality of teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. The teaching seen had many good features but the school is aware of the need to increase consistency across all lessons in all years.

- In the lessons seen teachers generally had high expectations for the work by the class. The praise given was warranted and weaker responses challenged and improved. Pupils knew what they were learning but did not always know how to improve their own individual responses. For example, in one lesson, while the planning provided a clear description of increasing challenge this was not shared explicitly with the class.
- There was good encouragement for pupils to suggest how the class performance could be improved and they responded confidently showing secure understanding of ways in which the songs could be changed, for example, by singing them faster or slower. However, some opportunities were missed to extend these answers by considering how the song could be sung more expressively.
- The singing sessions led by a specialist teacher from the music service as part of the Sing-Up initiative has had a clear impact on the quality of teaching. Teachers who were reluctant to teach singing provided good

support in the lessons seen and made effective use of many of the strategies modelled by the specialist.

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

The quality of the curriculum and extra-curricular provision is inadequate but this is mainly because the school has sensibly focussed on raising standards in singing as an appropriate first stage in the revitalisation of the music curriculum.

- The curriculum is at an early stage of development. While singing is now much stronger there are insufficient planned progressive opportunities for pupils to work creatively. The range of music pupils listen to is also too limited and pupils would welcome exploring different types of music in more depth.
- ICT is beginning to be used more effectively and some appropriate software has been purchased.
- Pupils enjoy the opportunities to perform to others in assemblies and in school, events. The performance in the cathedral with the choristers was particularly enjoyed. Nevertheless pupils are right in wanting more opportunities especially in the range and availability of instrumental lessons and in the establishment of a school choir.

### Leadership and management of music

The leadership and management of music are satisfactory with some outstanding features such as the way music is being developed through partnerships with others.

- The school has had to manage considerable changes in the staffing for music. The loss of the music subject leader who taught all classes meant that the school had to rethink the music provision. Many class teachers felt they had become deskilled and were not confident enough to teach music. The commitment to music though is clear in the way the school has made the most of opportunities available. The clever management of the work with the singing specialist is an excellent example as the original programme of a term's teaching in Key Stage 2 has been skilfully extended through work now in Key Stage 1. Most impressive is the way you planned this to provide ongoing additional support for the teachers who now lead music in their classes. The development of music as part of the Refugee and Traveller work in Year 6 is another excellent example.
- The school also manages the wider opportunities work effectively so that it has been continued beyond the first year. You identified that fewer boys than girls were continuing after the programme and the governing body provided excellent help in meeting boys and talking to them about their experiences. Good plans are in place to help address this gender difference.

- Pupils are being increasingly involved in the development of the music curriculum and are more than ready and willing to be involved further.
- The school recognises that there is still much to be done to make sure all classes receive regular musical experiences of consistent quality. This includes developing closer monitoring of the music provision.

Subject issue:

#### Inclusion

- All pupils feel involved in music and enjoy the opportunities provided. The school is aware of the need to find ways to involve more boys in instrumental lessons and extra-curricular activities.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- developing an overall curriculum map which ensures that the improved provision for singing is extended to include more opportunities for pupils to work creatively and to explore different kinds of music
- build on the undoubted success with the increased confidence of teachers to teach singing and ensure all classes receive regular music lessons of increasingly consistent quality
- include 'something to aim for' in all lessons so that pupils know what to do to improve their work
- increase extra-curricular opportunities, particularly the urgent creation of a school choir.

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

Anthony Knight  
Her Majesty's Inspector

