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Mrs J Reeder  
Headteacher  
The Potterhanworth Church of England Primary School  
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Dear Mrs Reeder

### Ofsted Subject Inspection Programme – Music

Thank you for your assistance and hospitality, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 09 June 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, extra-curricular activities and part of the forthcoming whole-school production.

The overall effectiveness of music is outstanding because of the way all pupils are included in music. Every child has extended opportunities to learn to play a musical instrument as part of their entitlement curriculum and to take part in excellent whole-school musical productions. Singing is an integral part of regular assemblies held in the local church and work linked with other subjects enhances pupils' musical understanding.

## Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in music are outstanding.

- All pupils make at least good progress and achieve excellently given their starting points. Children in the Early Years and Foundation Stage enjoy exploring sounds and copy rhythmic patterns accurately. They also sing confidently with the rest of the school in assemblies and school productions. Pupils in Key Stage 1 also enjoy singing, both in English and in German. They understand how sounds can be used to create different moods and how to organise sounds into rhythmic and melodic patterns. One boy demonstrated a very high level of understanding of melodic structure creating a very effective melody to describe a 'spooky' atmosphere.
- Pupils in Key Stage 2 have excellent instrumental and ensemble skills and perform confidently together. They have well developed notation reading skills which have been established over the two years of the instrumental programme. While some opportunities are given for pupils to listen to a range of music there are less opportunities for pupils to use their musical imagination and thus their creative skills are less well developed than their performance skills.
- Singing is good overall. Pupils sing musically as a whole school and in the school choir. The choir sang a range of songs impressively from memory. The school is aware of the need to include more songs where pupils are extended by being given the opportunity to sing different parts at the same time.
- All pupils are involved excellently in whole-school musical events and some pupils are involved in additional regular music experiences such as the choir, after-school music club and related activities such as the country dancing club.
- All these musical experiences contribute significantly to pupils' personal development and well-being.

## Quality of teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is outstanding.

- Lessons are always managed excellently and teachers and teaching assistants work effectively together. All lessons ensure all pupils are involved and enabled to make at least good progress. Teachers provide good challenge overall but there are occasions, particularly in creative work, when more detail about what would be a better response would help to ensure all pupils are constantly stretched.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils and between pupils are excellent and everyone enjoys making music together whether as a class or as a whole school. The obvious shared pleasure and active support and involvement shown by all teachers and pupils in the rehearsal of the forthcoming school production was exceptional.
- The instrumental sessions led by visiting specialist teachers from the music service are supported well by the class teachers, teaching assistants and

subject leader. Lessons maintain close attention to the accuracy of performance and really help pupils experience and understand how musicians rehearse together in some musical ensembles. There were some missed opportunities to link the listening work to what pupils were doing in the rest of the lesson and insufficient recognition of the need for pupils to wear ear plugs when playing percussion instruments loudly in the very resonant village hall.

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

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

- The curriculum includes excellent opportunities for all pupils to learn to play 'real' instruments together as a whole class. Each instrumental programme lasts for two years so pupils are given an appropriate amount of time to really discover their instrumental skills and decide whether they wish to continue to play a musical instrument at the end of the programme.
- Good links are made between music and other areas of the curriculum although pupils are right in wanting to have more of these opportunities especially for creative work. While teachers share their plans constantly the school is aware of the need to map all the different musical opportunities that occur through linked work with other subjects to ensure each experience builds on previous work.
- Singing is an important part of the music curriculum and is developed through the regular assemblies held in the Church. There are also excellent opportunities for pupils to perform to parents in the school productions.

## Leadership and management of music

The leadership and management of music are outstanding.

- You have given excellent support to the development of the music provision, making the most of recent initiatives and working closely with the music service. The investment in music for all is contributing much to the promotion of personal, social and health education in the school. Sensitive awareness of need ensures that financial support is given where necessary to ensure all pupils have equal access to the full range of musical opportunities.
- Music is led well and there is a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for further improvement. An excellent assessment system is being used which provides easy-to-use information about each child in relation to different aspects of the music curriculum.
- There is increasingly effective liaison between the visiting specialist and class teachers. The school rightly recognises that it has much to contribute to the ongoing development of the instrumental programmes. Partnerships with the music service are excellent.

Subject issue:

Inclusion

- Inclusion is outstanding. Music really is for all in this school.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- ensuring pupils are always challenged in performance work through, for example, providing more opportunities to pupils to sing and play music in more than one part
- mapping the opportunities for pupils to use their musical imagination to ensure they have an appropriate balance of different experiences and providing more detail about how pupils develop their creative skills so that pupils always know what would make an even better response.

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 cooperation in this evaluation.

Yours sincerely

Anthony Knight  
Her Majesty's Inspector