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Mrs J Cooper
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Cooper

Ofsted Subject Inspection Programme – Music

Thank you for your assistance and hospitality and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 04 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 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 extra-curricular ensembles; scrutiny of relevant documentation and pupils' work. Discussions were also held with members of staff, pupils and a member of the governing body.

The overall effectiveness of music is outstanding. Pupils are actively engaged in musical activities. High quality teaching combined with a curriculum which meets their needs and first class leadership enable pupils to make excellent progress.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in music are outstanding.

- Attainment on entry to the school is in line with expectations overall. Pupils make rapid progress and attain standards well above those expected by the end of Year 6.
- All aspects of music learning are equally well developed, including composition skills, a previously identified weaker aspect. For example, pupils in a Year 3/4 class successfully asked each other musical questions and discussed their work as they strove to develop their compositions.
- Pupils sing confidently in lessons. This skill is further developed by the choir who perform, with great assurance, two and three part songs from memory. Good attention is paid to musical detail and expression.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes towards their music making. They work very well together and support each other in a friendly and constructive way. An excellent example occurred in a lesson for Year 5/6 pupils where individuals eagerly volunteered to lead the class in call and response singing and rhythm work. All pupils took great pride in their accomplishments and were keen to 'get it right'.

Quality of teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good with outstanding features.

- Teaching is lively and engaging. Pupils enjoy practical music making where they learn through first-hand experience.
- Teachers generally have high expectations of their pupils. Pupils' behaviour is exceptional and their very positive attitudes toward learning music help them make rapid progress in lessons.
- Activities are well-sequenced and almost all lessons have a good sense of progression. Assessment is an integral part of learning and pupils evaluate their own and others' work. However at times, teachers do not provide sufficient time for pupils to reflect, refine and make musical improvements to their work.

Quality of the music curriculum and extra-curricular provision

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

- The curriculum is well-balanced and includes a wide range of musical styles. Pupils benefit considerably from the regular additional singing and rhythm work sessions which complement their normal class music lessons.
- The scheme of work very clearly identifies progression throughout the key stage and builds well on pupils' previous and current musical

experiences. Published teaching materials are successfully adapted so that individual needs are met well.

- Pupils make very good use of both computer programmes and traditional instruments to produce music compositions. This creative aspect of music learning was identified as being less well developed but it is now a regular part of music lessons together with singing, performing and talking about music.
- An extensive enrichment programme enables all pupils to be involved in music making. Music projects with professional musicians enhance class work, for example, pupils enjoyed learning about and playing the steel pans. They then developed this work through a composition task linked to their class topic about the Caribbean.
- Pupils take part in a good range of extra-curricular activities, with the class Ukulele band proving very popular.

Leadership and management of music

The leadership and management of music are outstanding.

- The head of subject is an excellent role model for music and inspires pupils to be involved in musical activities and to enjoy the subject. An appropriate training programme for all staff enables good practice to be shared and computer programs to be introduced. The head of subject is well supported by other staff who contribute very well, both through their subject expertise, teaching additional class lessons, and also by taking extra-curricular activities.
- Systematic monitoring using a variety of mechanisms enables the head of subject to have a thorough and accurate view of music provision. Documentation is of a high standard and used successfully to inform and plan future developments and ensure that standards remain well above average.
- Pupils' talent is recognised and opportunities are provided for this to be nurtured and celebrated at the regular concerts and celebration assemblies. The school recognises that more girls than boys are currently involved in extra-curricular activities. Nevertheless the school successfully engages all pupils, including many boys, in the well-received and presented productions.
- The school has developed very effective partnerships with local secondary schools. Curriculum workshops take place and this enables pupils to work successfully with teachers from other schools.

Inclusion

- The school's belief that music should be accessible to all pupils is clearly supported by its actions. Pupils respond enthusiastically to the different music opportunities provided for them. Enhancements to the basic curriculum, for example workshops from professional musicians

and projects with other schools, provide very good opportunities for all pupils to experience different types of music.

- Information about pupils' musical interests and involvement in instrumental lessons is kept. All pupils learn the recorder in Year 3 building on music learning at the infant school. Currently the school is exploring ways to involve pupils as soon as possible in the instrumental and/or vocal programme funded by the Government.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- improving aspects of teaching and learning by ensuring that all pupils have time during lessons to reflect and make musical improvements to their compositions.

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