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Miss S Smith  
Headteacher  
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Dear Miss Smith

Ofsted 2009-10 subject survey inspection programme: music

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and pupils, during my visit on 21 and 22 January 2010 to look at work in music.

As outlined in the initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the subject, the visit had a particular focus on the extent to which all pupils are benefiting from the provision. I also explored the partnerships you may have developed with other schools and agencies to improve continuity and increase opportunity for your pupils.

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.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included interviews with staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of four lessons and an assembly.

The overall effectiveness of music is good. The school provides wide ranging opportunities that involve pupils in music. Teachers' very secure subject knowledge is used effectively to plan and teach activities that engage pupils well and develop their musical understanding.

Achievement in music

Achievement in music is good.

- Pupils, including children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, make good progress in relation to their below average starting points. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is broadly average, with the attainment of some pupils being above average. Pupils sing confidently with clear diction and

well-projected tone quality. All pupils in Years 4 and 5 take part in whole-class instrumental lessons, where they develop good musical understanding and secure instrumental skills.

- Good numbers of pupils are involved in instrumental lessons, extra-curricular activities and in public performances, where they achieve well.
- Pupils' personal development in music is good. They enjoy their music lessons and other activities, concentrate well and support and help each other.

#### Quality of teaching in music

The quality of teaching in music is good.

- Good working relationships between teachers and pupils help to establish a positive climate for learning. Lessons are planned carefully and almost always identify what pupils are intended to learn, as well as do.
- Teachers' very secure subject knowledge is used effectively to identify appropriate musical activities, demonstrate good practice to pupils and provide helpful feedback that enables pupils to improve their work.
- Teachers' ongoing assessments, often supported by detailed records of pupils' achievements, provide a secure basis for work to be modified to meet the individual needs of different pupils. Tasks are, therefore, often differentiated well. For example, music for pupils learning the guitar as a whole-class activity had been carefully arranged so that all could achieve well.
- The school is developing its use of information and communication technology (ICT) in music, which is currently satisfactory. It recognises the potential for making more use of ICT, including recordings of pupils' work, to raise achievement further.

#### Quality of the curriculum in music

The quality of the curriculum in music is good.

- The curriculum includes a good range of musical styles and genres and a variety of musical activities, including weekly opportunities for singing in all year groups. Although learning outcomes for individual lessons provide a good basis for assessment, the scheme of work does not provide an overview of progression by, for example, identifying what pupils of different prior attainment are expected to achieve by the end of each unit.
- The curriculum is enhanced by a good range of individual and small group instrumental lessons, extra-curricular activities and workshops, many of which involve all pupils in the relevant year groups.
- Opportunities provided by the local authority's music service for all pupils in Years 4 and 5 to learn to play recorder and the guitar are worthwhile and contribute well to pupils' achievements. However, the school and music service have rightly identified the need to ensure that planning and

assessment systems are consistent across all year groups. Planning for whole-class instrumental teaching, while good in other respects, does not explicitly identify how it contributes to National Curriculum provision or to pupils' attainment as measured against National Curriculum levels.

#### Effectiveness of leadership and management in music

The effectiveness of the leadership and management in music is good.

- The school places great value on the wide range of musical opportunities it provides for its pupils. It has ensured that specialist teachers are available to provide good-quality opportunities for all pupils to benefit fully from its provision. Teaching in most year groups is undertaken by the subject leader who is a music specialist. Whole-class instrumental programmes in Years 4 and 5, which are an integral part of the provision for music, are also taught by specialists.
- Arrangements for monitoring provision are good and lead to the identification of specific support to further develop the effectiveness of teaching and subject leadership. The school has identified appropriate key areas for development to support the raising of achievement and broadening of provision.

#### Subject issue: inclusion

- The school's inclusive approach to music ensures that all pupils are well provided for within the curriculum. There are good opportunities beyond lessons for pupils, including the relatively high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those entitled to free school meals, to be involved. While most groups of pupils are equally well represented in these activities, the school has correctly identified that pupils from particular minority ethnic groups need further encouragement to become involved in instrumental lessons.

#### Subject issue: partnerships

- The school's strong links with the local authority music service are used effectively to improve outcomes and provision for pupils. Partnerships with professional musicians, for example in jazz, also enhance opportunities for pupils. The school has identified the need to identify other musicians and agencies to broaden the range of music from different cultures that pupils experience in workshop activities.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- increasing the consistency of curriculum and lesson planning by:
  - developing a more consistent approach to planning and assessment in whole-class instrumental lessons and other music lessons

- identifying what pupils of differing prior attainment are expected to learn by the end of each unit
  - ensuring that learning outcomes in lesson planning are linked to these outcomes
- broadening the school's provision further by:
- providing additional opportunities for pupils to experience a wider range of non-Western music in workshops and extra-curricular activities
  - actively encouraging pupils from all groups within the school to be involved in instrumental lessons.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop music in the school.

As I explained in the previous letter, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be published on the Ofsted website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

David Williams  
Additional Inspector