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Mrs J Cruise  
Headteacher  
St Pius X Roman Catholic Voluntary  
Aided Primary School  
Thornfield Road  
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Consett  
DH8 8AX

Dear Mrs Cruise

### **Ofsted 2010–11 subject survey inspection programme: music**

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and pupils, during my visit on 27 May 2010 to look at work in music.

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 without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included: interviews with staff and selected pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; and visits to five lessons with observations of instrumental lessons and extra-curricular activities.

The overall effectiveness of music is good.

#### **Achievement in music**

Achievement in music is good.

- Children in the Foundation Stage experience a variety of music games and songs which enables them to make satisfactory progress. They enjoy responding to different pieces of music and developing their use of musical vocabulary.
- From low starting points, pupils make good progress by the end of Year 6, although the standards that they attain overall are below those normally expected. The school recognises that while some aspects are stronger - for example, vocal work, where pupils sing with enthusiasm and good attention to detail, there are not as many opportunities for them to develop their creativity in music.

- A small number of pupils have additional individual instrumental lessons. All pupils in Years 3 and 4 are learning to play the ocarina and the school plans to re-introduce whole-class drumming lessons for other pupils next term.

### **Quality of teaching in music**

The quality of teaching in music is good.

- Most lessons are planned with clear musical learning objectives. In the best lessons, pupils' musical participation and enjoyment are emphasised constantly. They are questioned well and encouraged to assess and evaluate their progress. While teachers generally have a good knowledge of music and model activities successfully, occasionally, lessons do not meet all pupils' needs and interests.
- Although detailed records are kept of individual pupils' musical progress, the school recognises that use of audio recordings for pupils to listen to and improve their compositions is limited.

### **Quality of the curriculum in music**

The quality of the curriculum in music is good.

- Despite the curriculum being in a period of transition, careful planning over a two-year cycle ensures that pupils' musical skills are developed and re-visited systematically. Information and communication technology is beginning to be used with pupils in Years 5 and 6; the school plans to extend this to other classes once appropriate software has been purchased.
- Pupils enjoy the opportunities to perform to others in assemblies and in outside musical events. These performances develop pupils' personal and social qualities well, especially when they work with pupils from other schools. Productions also do a great deal for the school's contribution to the community.

### **Effectiveness of leadership and management in music**

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

- Leaders bring enthusiasm to their roles and recognise, rightly, how music can enhance the development of the whole child. As a result, they ensure that whole-school opportunities are provided regularly for all pupils. The commitment to music is also clear in the way the school has made the most of musical events available. Managing the wider opportunities work and funding additional whole-class instrumental lessons have successfully involved pupils in learning instruments, despite the limited number of ensembles currently available.
- Strong links have been established with different partners, especially the local music service, so that national music initiatives can be successfully

incorporated into music provision. These links, together with thorough monitoring, ensure that appropriate training is sought and delivered.

**Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:**

- ensuring all teaching matches the best by:
  - making sure what is taught in lessons meets all pupils' needs and interests
  - using audio recordings more frequently in lessons so that pupils can understand and recognise how to improve their work
  
- increasing the variety of musical ensembles.

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

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

Yours sincerely

**Marianne Young**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**