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Mr K Davies  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Davies

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 10 June 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 pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of four lessons, a whole-school singing assembly and two extra-curricular activities.

The overall effectiveness of music is good.

Achievement in music

Achievement in music is good.

- Pupils make good progress in music lessons, especially in developing the quality and accuracy of their singing. By the end of Year 6, standards in singing are above average while standards in playing instruments are broadly average. Pupils use instruments well to enhance the quality of their singing by playing melodic or rhythmic repeating patterns. Although their skills in composing on instruments are less well developed, pupils invent simple vocal melodies and understand how musical devices, including repetition and sequence, are used to create music.
- Many pupils are involved in extra-curricular activities, such as choirs and whole-school events. The number of pupils involved in instrumental lessons, however, is relatively small.

- Pupils' personal development in music is good. They enjoy their music making, concentrate well in lessons and rehearsals, and support and help each other effectively.

#### Quality of teaching in music

The quality of teaching in music is good.

- Very good working relationships between teachers and pupils help to establish a positive climate for learning. Lessons almost always identify precisely what pupils are intended to learn and engage pupils directly in music making, often through the use of the voice. Teachers model good practice in singing and playing instruments and have high expectations of what is to be achieved.
- In most cases, teachers use ongoing assessment very well to identify areas for improvement and demonstrate how the quality of music making could be improved. However, this is not yet consistent across all classes. Teachers have a good working knowledge of pupils' progress, but written records of how well pupils are doing are not as well developed.
- Teachers use information and communication technology (ICT) well to support learning and, in a few cases, pupils make good use of appropriate computer software. For example, pupils supported their vocal improvisations by checking the accuracy of their pitching using an on-screen electronic keyboard. Overall, however, more use could be made of ICT, including recordings, to help pupils listen to and evaluate their work.

#### Quality of the curriculum in music

The quality of the curriculum in music is satisfactory.

- An area of particular strength in the curriculum is the sequential development of the quality of singing. This permeates the whole music curriculum and creates a strong focus for developing musical skills, understanding and enjoyment throughout the school. Opportunities also exist for composing and for using ICT. However, these are not presented explicitly in the scheme of work and the school has rightly identified that these are areas for further development.
- Pupils from all groups within the school have good opportunities to take part in extra-curricular activities and performances both within and beyond the school. However, pupils who do not learn to play musical instruments have few opportunities to be involved in instrumental ensembles outside the classroom. At present, the school is not involved in the Key Stage 2 whole-class instrumental programme, and the proportion of pupils receiving instrumental lessons in school is relatively small.

#### Effectiveness of leadership and management in music

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

- The school's clear vision for music is seen in its accurate evaluation of strengths and areas for development and through the support provided for teachers to ensure that they develop the necessary musical skills and understanding. The impact of this is seen in the high standards achieved in singing and in the teachers' commitment to music.
- The inclusion in extra-curricular activities of pupils from different groups within the school is good. The school recognises, however, that it needs to remain proactive in analysing and encouraging the involvement of all pupils in musical activities.
- The school has established effective partnerships with external organisations, including the local authority music service and other professional musicians. Key partnerships with national organisations focusing on the use of the voice have made a significant contribution to the quality of singing in the school.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- building on the school's strong vocal provision to further develop the curriculum by:
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to use their musical skills expressively and creatively when composing
  - making further use of ICT and recordings to celebrate and evaluate pupils' work
- providing more opportunities for pupils to perform on instruments by:
  - broadening the range of extra-curricular activities
  - becoming involved in the Key Stage 2 instrumental programme.

I hope 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

David Williams  
Additional Inspector