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Mr P Underwood
Headteacher
St Winefride's Roman Catholic Primary School
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Dear Mr Underwood

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 11 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 a panel of Year 6 pupils; a meeting with the Chief Executive of Newham Music Trust; scrutiny of relevant documentation and of pupils' work; visits to the whole-school assembly and recorder group rehearsal; and observation of four class music lessons.

The overall effectiveness of music is good.

Achievement in music

Achievement in music is good.

- Standards at the end of Year 6 are broadly average. They are firmly in line with national expectations for singing and broadly average for creating music, but below expectations in playing instruments. Overall, pupils make good progress in developing their musical understanding given their limited musical experiences before starting school.
- Participation in wider opportunities, such as the vocal and recorder programmes, is raising standards. These standards are improving successfully because all pupils participate in the programmes for two years.

- Good numbers are involved in the choirs, including increasing numbers of boys. Half of the pupils in the large Year 5 choir are boys. A reasonable number of pupils are learning to play instruments through additional tuition in school, with more learning out of school. However, few of these pupils are involved in instrumental ensembles and a significant number would like further instrumental tuition.
- Participation in music does much to raise the self-esteem and confidence of pupils, particularly those who enjoy singing in the choirs.

Quality of teaching in music

The quality of teaching in music is good.

- A distinctive feature of the best lessons is the very effective team-teaching that has been developed between staff from Newham Music Trust and class teachers. Specialist music knowledge is complemented by generic teaching skills and knowledge of individual pupils' needs. Consequently, there is a clear focus on musical quality, all pupils are included, and there is quick intervention to help any who find participation difficult.
- A formal assessment scheme is in place, again developed in partnership with the music trust. Pupils' work is recorded regularly and used well by teachers across the school.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) is used extensively to engage older pupils in music-related activities, particularly those who do not participate in the choirs or learn to play instruments. ICT is not always used musically. Too often, there is more emphasis on the technology than on the musical quality of pupils' responses.

Quality of the curriculum in music

The quality of the curriculum in music is satisfactory.

- The school has worked hard to provide pupils with a broad range of activities that ensure that all curriculum requirements are met. These activities are well-organised and taught well, helping pupils to reach average standards. However, standards are not higher than this because insufficient thought is given to how all these activities could join together to form a progressive curriculum.
- A music therapist offers weekly support to a small number of pupils who have difficulty with learning or social skills. Additional instrumental tuition for more able pupils is offered on violin, guitar, drums, and recorder.
- The school has shown a good commitment to music through the creation of the music room and provision of additional curriculum programmes. However, there are only just enough classroom percussion instruments, particularly those suitable for use by older pupils.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in music

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

- There is a very clear vision for music. This is shown in good monitoring and excellent action planning for further improvement. Pupils play a part in this too, through their discussions in the school council. The school knows that more could be done to engage instrumentalists in ensemble work, and that better coordination of curriculum activities is required before leadership can be considered outstanding.
- Partnership work is outstanding. You have made good use of the standards funding for music, together with considerable contributions from your own school budget, to build a strong partnership with Newham Music Trust. The school has also embraced the national singing strategy; good use of the online materials, regional events, and training opportunities have all helped to improve vocal work. However, teachers have yet to benefit from the national professional development programme.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- further improving standards in playing instruments by :
 - enabling a greater number of older pupils to experience additional tuition
 - providing opportunities for all pupils who learn instruments, whether in or out of school, to play together regularly in ensemble
- ensuring that there is a clear overview and coordination of all curriculum provision, a clear sense of musical progression across activities from the Reception onwards and an ambitious expectation for above-average standards by the end of Year 6.

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

Mark Phillips
Her Majesty's Inspector