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8 July 2010

Mr R Whitewick  
Headteacher  
Holbrook Primary School  
Holbrook Lane  
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Wiltshire  
BA14 0PS

Dear Mr Whitewick

### **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 30 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 three lessons and a rehearsal.

The overall effectiveness of music is good.

#### **Achievement in music**

Achievement in music is good.

- Pupils make good progress in relation to their below-average starting points and, by the end of Year 6, their attainment is broadly average. They sing confidently and enthusiastically with good control and clear diction. They use instruments confidently to create their own music and understand how to modify the mood of their compositions by making changes to the musical elements such as speed, dynamics or tonality.
- Pupils have good opportunities to perform including public performances given by each class. Year 6 pupils sang confidently and with enjoyment in a rehearsal for their forthcoming performance of a musical. Good numbers of pupils are involved in other extra-curricular activities. However, although the school actively encourages pupils to learn instruments, the number of pupils receiving instrumental lessons is relatively small.

- Pupils' personal development through music is good. They enjoy their music making, enthusiastically taking part in whole-class and small group activities, supporting and helping each other positively and constructively.

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

The quality of teaching in music is good.

- Teachers and pupils have established very positive working relationships which provide a secure context for learning. Class teachers make good use of their satisfactory subject knowledge to engage pupils in practical music making and learning through first-hand experience.
- In most cases, teachers identify clearly and precisely what pupils are intended to learn and use a good variety of well-sequenced activities. Ongoing assessment is used well to identify areas for further development and helpful feedback is given to pupils. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own progress and identify what they need to do to improve. In other lessons, where learning objectives are not precise enough, pupils are less secure in identifying how to improve their work.
- Teachers keep good written records of pupils' progress matched against a carefully sequenced progression of musical skills. While some use is made of information and communication technology (ICT) and recordings of pupils' work, these have rightly been identified as a priority for further development to support and celebrate pupils' achievements and help them to evaluate their work.

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

The quality of the curriculum in music is satisfactory.

- The school's decision to base its curriculum on a cross-curricular approach is developing a greater sense of coherence and relevance for music. As part of this development, the school has rightly ensured that music retains the focus on subject-specific skills, knowledge and understanding through basing the music curriculum on a well-sequenced progression of musical skills. Although this new approach is developing well, some variation remains in the extent to which the curriculum for all classes includes and integrates the different aspects of the music curriculum.
- Good opportunities are provided for all pupils to take part in public performances with their classes and in other activities including workshops led by outside musicians. Pupils from most groups within the school are involved in extra-curricular activities, and the school is actively encouraging others to become involved.

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

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

- The school has accurately identified its strengths and areas for development through evaluation and established a clear vision for the

further development of music. For example, the introduction of whole-class instrumental teaching for pupils in Year 3 from September 2010 forms one part of the school's approach to broadening its curriculum. Although aspects for further development remain, good progress has been made, for example in involving more pupils in musical activities and in increasing the coherence of the music curriculum.

- The improvement plan for music has correctly identified the need to develop the quality of teaching by providing further training opportunities to develop subject-specific knowledge and understanding, particularly for teachers in Key Stage 2.
- Pupils and teachers benefit from partnerships between the school and external organisations, including the local authority music service, a further education college and other professional musicians who provide support through activities, including workshops involving music from different parts of the world.

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

- making greater use of ICT and recordings to support, celebrate and evaluate pupils' work
- implementing a programme of professional development to further develop teachers' confidence and subject knowledge
- increasing pupils' involvement by continuing to encourage different groups of pupils to take part in instrumental lessons and extra-curricular activities.

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

**David Williams**  
**Additional Inspector**