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Mrs E Horridge  
Headteacher  
Canon Burrows CofE Primary School  
Oldham Road  
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Dear Mrs Horridge

### **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 22 September 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 Year 6 pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; observation of six class lessons, three of which were jointly observed; singing sessions, 'wider opportunities' whole-class instrumental lessons and extra-curricular music ensembles.

The overall effectiveness of music is good.

### **Achievement in music**

Achievement in music is good.

- Standards at the end of Year 6 are above average, especially in singing. Pupils make good progress in developing their musical skills and knowledge given their varied experiences before starting school.
- Participation in the 'wider opportunities' instrumental programme is helping to raise standards and to introduce pupils to a range of musical instruments and styles of music. Standards are improving because all pupils participate in the programmes for more than one year.
- Participation in music does much to raise the self-esteem and confidence of pupils, especially those who would otherwise not be able to join in because of the cost involved in learning an instrument.

- A reasonable number of pupils are involved in the choirs, individual instrumental lessons and other musical ensembles. When preparing for this inspection, leaders discovered that some pupils are also involved in music activities out of school.

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

The quality of teaching in music is good.

- Effective planning and use of audio recordings to help pupils hear what they have played and understand how to improve are key features of the best lessons. Pupils are encouraged to demonstrate their understanding of musical skills and key concepts through singing or playing instruments.
- A minority of less successful lessons do not enable pupils to respond musically or to experiment with sounds. In these lessons, pupils' first responses are accepted too readily and musical rehearsal is not used to improve the quality of their work.
- The wider opportunities instrumental programme has enabled some staff to work with and learn from external providers. This has helped build their confidence and expertise when delivering music lessons. Observations during the inspection, however, showed that the quality of this teaching was mixed and does not always understand or build on pupils' prior musical learning and abilities.

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

The quality of the curriculum in music is good.

- The school has worked hard to provide pupils with a good range of musical activities to ensure all requirements are met. Additional singing sessions and whole-class instrumental learning complement and develop pupils' skills and knowledge well. As a result, the curriculum shows progression and appropriate steps in learning are identified clearly. Occasionally, though, teachers' inexperience means that planning is adapted insufficiently to meet individual needs.
- The school demonstrates a good commitment to music through the provision of additional curriculum programmes. Pupils also benefit from attending workshops and concerts both in school and in the wider community.
- Although a number of ensembles meet regularly, including two choirs, these are at present dominated by girls.

### **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 and commitment to providing the best possible musical experiences for all pupils. You, ably supported by the subject leader, recognise the benefits that music brings to the

development of all pupils. Consequently, music is heard regularly around the school. Good financial support is given so that, for example, all pupils can continue to access activities. The subject leader has a good knowledge of national initiatives and attends regional meetings regularly.

- Self-evaluation is very effective; together with regular monitoring it ensures that staff are provided with additional support when necessary. The developments identified during the inspection are evident in the music improvement plan. Overall, leadership provides a secure capacity for further development.

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

- improving the quality of teaching by:
  - using rehearsal skills in all lessons to consolidate pupils' knowledge and understanding
  - increasing emphasis on pupils' aural and practical responses in all lessons
  - making more use of pupils' external musical experiences when planning lessons.

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 published on the Ofsted website. It may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection. Except in the case of academies, a copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

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