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Mrs H Childs  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Childs

### Ofsted Subject Inspection Programme – Music

Thank you for your assistance and hospitality, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 03 June 2008. At the end of the inspection I fed back my judgements and this letter is to confirm my findings.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the subject, the visit had a particular focus on the extent to which every pupil is benefiting from your music provision. It also explored the links you have developed with other schools and agencies.

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 unless to highlight exceptional practice. In such circumstances the school would be contacted prior to publication to agree the exact wording. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included: discussions with members of staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation and observation of lessons and an assembly.

The overall effectiveness of music is satisfactory with areas of strength particularly in the range of difference musical experiences provided for pupils. The school has been through major rebuilding work and, with your change of role to headteacher while continuing as the music coordinator, this has understandably made it difficult to maintain and develop the music provision. Nevertheless, there is a strong commitment to music and the school is well positioned to build on previous work and make further progress.

## Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in music are satisfactory overall.

- Children in the Foundation Stage respond well and have a good understanding of how sounds can be changed. Standards by the end of Key Stage 1 are broadly in line with expectations. Pupils can name and play instruments with confidence and enjoy adding sounds to stories.
- Pupils in Key Stage 2 make steady progress and achieve standards broadly in line with expectations. Most have developed a secure sense of pulse and sing tunefully together. A small group of pupils performed particularly well creating their own layered rhythmic piece to accompany dance presentations by the rest of the class. However, there is not enough challenge overall, particularly for the more able and for the older pupils, and this is limiting some pupils' progress.
- There is good involvement of the younger Key Stage 2 pupils in playing a musical instrument. All pupils in Year 4 play the fife and there are plans to reintroduce whole class recorder playing. Just over half of the school has additional instrumental lessons with about a third playing the guitar. All pupils are given a range of opportunities to perform within and beyond the school but there are currently no regular extra-curricular musical activities.
- Pupils work well together and generally enjoy music. Most respond enthusiastically and all commented positively about the workshops on Gamelan and African drumming.

## Quality of teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory with good features.

- All teachers have developed good relationships with their classes and work is managed well. Lessons are carefully planned and include a good range of different learning experiences. However, much of the work is aimed at the whole class and so more able pupils, for example, are not always given the challenge they need to improve their work further.
- Good use is made of effective questioning. Pupils in the Foundation Stage were sensibly asked to 'show me' so they could respond musically. Good use is also made of linking aural and physical responses to help pupils develop their understanding of pulse.
- Specific weaknesses are skilfully identified, for example, parts of the song that pupils find more difficult, but not enough time is given for pupils to rehearse these and make real improvement.
- While there was one excellent reference in the Foundation Stage lesson to pupils recording their work, so that it could be played to children in the pre-school, opportunities were missed to let the pupils learn through regularly hearing their work. The school is aware of the need to develop simple forms of assessment so that pupils know how well they are doing and all teachers have clear information about individual pupils' progress.

## Quality of the music curriculum and extra-curricular provision

The overall quality of the curriculum and extra-curricular provision is satisfactory with particular strength in the range of experiences provided.

- The curriculum includes a good range of different musical experiences. Pupils in the lower part of Key Stage 2 have good opportunities to learn to play a musical instrument and many continue this through additional instrumental lessons. A good variety of additional workshops are provided and pupils are involved in exciting performance opportunities beyond the school. There are good plans to reintroduce a rock band as a regular extra-curricular activity.
- There are detailed curriculum plans for Years 1 to 4 based on the QCA scheme of work. However, it is not easy to see how these plans integrate with the rest of the music curriculum. The school is aware of the need to develop the curriculum further by defining expectations for each year and ensuring the curriculum enables progressive and coherent development of pupils' musical skills, knowledge and understanding.

## Leadership and management of music

The leadership and management of music are satisfactory with strengths, particularly in the leadership and the way the staff work together.

- The school is strongly committed to music. You have created firm foundations for the music provision and have good plans for its further development. Regular opportunities have been safeguarded for singing and additional musical experiences provided for pupils. It is clear, however, that progress has been understandably affected by your added responsibilities as headteacher and the building works. Hence, the teaching of music across the school has not been monitored as regularly as you would have wished.
- The team of dedicated staff enjoy teaching music and work excellently together, as seen in the way they were all impressively involved in the feedback from this inspection. Staff have good musical skills and recognise the need to now find ways to further increase the progress pupils make in each lesson and across the key stages.

## Subject issues:

### Partnership Links

- Good links are being developed with the pre-school.
- Staff with different areas of expertise have been appointed through good use of a Trust Fund. These staff are contributing much to the music provision.

- Some links have been developed with the music service mainly though the opportunities for performing beyond the school and the workshops.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- refining learning objectives so that pupils know what to do to improve their work and simple information can be collected about pupils' progress
- keeping learning objectives simple so that all tasks consolidate and reinforce the same learning and pupils have enough time to make real progress
- mapping the curriculum to ensure all learning experiences are taught as part of a balanced progressive programme.

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

As I explained in my previous letter, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be published on Ofsted's website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

In 6-12 months after the inspection visit, we would like to gather information on the impact of this inspection on the improvements in this subject in your school. To this end you may be contacted by telephone or sent a questionnaire to complete. We appreciate your co-operation in this evaluation.

Yours sincerely

Anthony Knight  
Her Majesty's Inspector

