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Mrs K Samples  
Acting Headteacher  
Elworth C of E Primary School  
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Dear Mrs Samples

Ofsted Subject Inspection Programme – Music

Thank you for your assistance and hospitality and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 16-17 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 any 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: observation of lessons, an assembly and instrumental lessons. Discussions were held with members of staff and pupils and relevant documentation was scrutinised.

The overall effectiveness of music is good. The regular opportunities for all pupils to perform both in lessons and during other events and concerts contribute very effectively to raising their self-confidence and esteem. These concerts are valued and enjoyed by the pupils together with their families and friends.

## Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in music are good.

- Standards overall are broadly in line with national expectations and pupils' achievement is good given their attainment when they join the school. Performance standards, especially by those pupils who have instrumental lessons, are often above expectations.
- Singing is made fun and pupils are familiar with a variety of singing games and other 'warm up' activities. Again, pupils are confident performers and have a good understanding of how to sing without direction and interpret the words in a song.
- Children in the Foundation Stage take part in a range of music activities which help them to recognise different sounds and to perform together.
- Some pupils in Key Stage 2 have a clear understanding of how to compose and can play rhythmic patterns well.
- A quarter of pupils have instrumental tuition within and outside of the school. They perform well on their instruments and enjoy taking part in whole school music events which regularly and impressively involve all pupils

## Quality of teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good.

- The best learning takes place when teachers model the work to be undertaken and the level of challenge for each pupil is appropriate and is increased during lessons. Expectations are high and pupils understand clearly what they are expected to do and learn. Recording pupils' work is also a strong feature; this helps them to reflect, evaluate their work and make any necessary improvements.
- Relationships are very positive, pupils want to do their best and their behaviour is good.
- Assessment of pupils' progress is being undertaken during lessons, but at present there is no agreement as to which format is to be used. This makes it difficult for teachers to easily compare and monitor the progress made by pupils in their class.
- Questioning is used regularly but sometimes pupils are given insufficient time to consider and explain their answers. Occasionally, however, too much emphasis is placed on completing the activity and insufficient attention is given to the development of pupils' musical skills.

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

The overall quality of the curriculum is satisfactory with significant strengths in enrichment and instrumental provision.

- A new scheme of work is to be introduced for all classes from next September. The subject leader has already identified modifications that will be needed. This is to ensure a progressive development of pupils' musical skills and to ensure that all staff understand how to challenge their different abilities when planning lessons. At present, pupils have a limited awareness of music from different countries. Work is already in hand to introduce a wider variety of musical styles into the curriculum.
- All pupils in Years 5 and 6 have learnt to play the recorder and those in Years 3 and 4 have benefited significantly from singing workshops provided by the county music adviser. These have improved both pupils' performance and their singing abilities. The latter was ably demonstrated during the assembly, when the pupils sang confidently and expressively a group of songs linked to the theme of 'The Vikings'.
- Around a quarter of pupils learn a musical instrument with many playing in the school orchestra. Several pupils have gained merit and distinction results in the Associated Board examinations.

#### Leadership and management of music

The leadership and management of music are good.

- There is a clear vision for the development of music and the improvement plan identifies sensible priorities, building on the current practice.
- The school benefits from having an energetic, hard working and very competent subject leader who leads by example. She provides very good opportunities for all pupils to be involved in music making and also a varied range of activities and musical events for those who are more able.
- Senior leaders acknowledge that the subject leader needs more time in order to introduce the new curriculum successfully, to monitor its effectiveness throughout the school and to provide additional help and support for staff where needed.
- Some identification of pupils' progress and musical ability is undertaken. Plans are in place to standardise the format used and to share the information more regularly with pupils.

Subject issues:

#### Partnership Links

- There are successful annual links with other primary and secondary schools where pupils perform in a collaborative arts production.
- Pupils perform regularly at different venues locally and throughout the county. Links with the music services enables some more able pupils to take part in an arts residential weekend where music has a high profile.

- The school has used its allocation of funding from the Government's instrumental and/or vocal programme to purchase new teaching materials, develop recorder clubs and to enable Year 3 and 4 pupils to take part in a singing workshop.

#### Inclusion

- The school collects information about pupils' musical interests and involvement in instrumental lessons. However the information about their progress is less well developed.
- Music is a very important part of the life of the school. Frequent performances and concerts ensure all pupils are involved regularly.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- ensuring that the new scheme of work enables pupils' musical skills to be developed systematically
- providing sufficient time for the subject leader to monitor the effectiveness of the changes to the curriculum and to provide additional support to teachers to help develop their expertise and confidence
- broadening the range of musical styles studied by the pupils.

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 cooperation in this evaluation.

Yours sincerely

Marianne Young  
Her Majesty's Inspector