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Mrs A Walker  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Walker

### Ofsted Subject Inspection Programme – Music

Thank you for your assistance and hospitality, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 14 May 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, such as the local Music Service.

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 extra-curricular activities and music lessons.

The overall effectiveness of music is outstanding. A strong whole-school commitment to music results in pupils gaining great enjoyment from singing and playing. They make excellent progress and attain very high standards. The involvement of all teachers in the music provision emphasises the school's fully inclusive approach, and as a consequence pupils are confident in their belief that 'music is for everyone.' Excellent subject leadership, including thorough monitoring and evaluation, ensures that the quality of music

provision is continually being scrutinised and developed, so that it fully meets the needs of all pupils.

### Achievement and standards

- Across the school, the majority of pupils make excellent progress in music. Many are highly competent singers and instrumentalists. Standards are consistently above national expectations, and pupils are confident in the use of subject specific vocabulary.
- Pupils greatly enjoy music lessons. The school's attention to inclusion means that all feel fully involved, and know that they have access to all of the musical activities on offer.
- Challenging work supports pupils' outstanding achievement. All pupils, including those with learning difficulties, make at least good progress.
- Outcomes in terms of pupils' personal development are outstanding. Pupils describe the ways in which involvement in music has helped them to develop greater confidence and self-esteem. They also benefit from developing their team-working skills.
- Pupils themselves are aware of the positive impact that music has on generic skills, such as listening and appraising. There is also evidence that work in music technology helps to develop pupils' wider proficiency in information and communication technology (ICT).
- The school's very strong commitment to inclusion is reflected in all aspects of music provision. The whole school approach to delivery of music within the classroom emphasises the principle that music is for all. Pupils are adamant in the view that 'everyone can take part'.
- All pupils are actively encouraged to learn an instrument and to develop their vocal skills.
- Staff are fully aware of the contribution made by music in enhancing the lives of individual pupils, including those with learning difficulties.

### Quality of teaching and learning

- The overall quality of teaching and learning in music is outstanding. All teachers fully appreciate the practical nature of music and show confidence in teaching music. They share the view that music plays an important part in promoting 'excellence and enjoyment.'
- Music lessons typically involve a variety of activities, including vocal and instrumental performance, composition, improvisation, and listening work. Expectations are high, and the work set is suitably challenging. Lessons are well paced and pupils remain focused. Very good attention is paid to supporting individual pupils
- The contribution of Local Authority music support staff is excellent. Lessons are fun and lively, and ensure that pupils remain motivated.
- The use of ICT in music lessons is a significant strength. Teachers use interactive whiteboards well. Sound editing software is used to very good effect by pupils in creating soundscapes.

- There is some exemplary use of self evaluation and peer evaluation by pupils, who are skilfully guided by teachers in this process. Pupils respect each other's work, and give fair and constructive feedback and encouragement to each other.
- Teachers assess pupils' progress informally during lessons, and as a result they are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of individual pupils. However, there is currently no established formal system for assessing pupils' attainment at the end of year or end of key stage.

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

- The music curriculum is outstanding. Music has a very high profile within the school community, and this is reflected both in lessons and extra-curricular work.
- After using published schemes of work as a starting point, teachers are now gaining confidence in using music creatively as part of a cross-curricular approach. The school's schemes of work ensure that pupils' skills in vocal and instrumental work are effectively built upon.
- Schemes of work are under constant review, in response to topics and themes covered in other areas of study. Pupils understand the links between music and other subjects; they welcome the opportunity to sing in French, or to sing songs that reinforce learning in mathematics and science.
- Engaging with music from a variety of cultures has a positive impact on pupils' spiritual and cultural development.
- The music curriculum is enriched through the contribution of visitors, for example, those specialising in African drumming, or Tudor music.
- There are numerous opportunities for pupils to sing and play together in and out of lessons. Pupils and staff know that this is a 'singing school', and enjoy singing together during assemblies. Extra-curricular groups are popular, and pupils love to take part in school productions.

#### Leadership and management of music

- Leadership and management of music are outstanding. The music co-ordinator has a clear vision for music in the school, and her tremendous enthusiasm is conveyed to the pupils. She is well supported by the senior management team.
- The subject co-ordinator provides high quality support and encouragement to other teachers within the school.
- Action planning is of exemplary quality, and is securely based on thorough monitoring and evaluation of music provision in the school. The music co-ordinator has accurately identified priorities for development and is constantly striving to further improve the quality of resources, teaching and learning, and the curriculum.

Subject issue: Partnership Links

- Good links with external partners enhance the quality of music provision. Work carried out in collaboration with the Local Authority music service is excellent. Visiting teachers make an important contribution to the musical life of the school, and pupils enjoy performing in ensembles, outside the school, run by the music service.
- Good work has been carried out in music and dance as part of the School Sports Partnership.
- The school has established effective links within the local community, for example, through performing at a residential home for senior citizens.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- developing and implementing a more formal system for assessment.

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

Julie Price Grimshaw  
Additional Inspector