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Mr R Morrissey
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Morrissey

Ofsted Subject Inspection Programme – Music

Thank you very much for your assistance and hospitality and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 24 January 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: interviews with members of staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of lessons.

The overall effectiveness of music at Long Lawford is satisfactory. Achievement and standards have improved recently and are now satisfactory because of effective project work with the Music Service, leading to the increasing confidence of class teachers to teach effective music lessons. The school is aware that there is more to be done to ensure the continued development of music.

Achievement and Standards

Achievement and standards are satisfactory.

- Pupils start school with broadly average attainment. The standard of their work in music is also in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and in Key Stage 2, representing satisfactory progress.
- Pupils enjoy music. They respond well in the singing project where good expectations enable them to participate enthusiastically, gain in self-confidence, and contribute effectively. Pupils' rhythmic skills are developing well, especially in Key Stage 1. Key Stage 2 pupils particularly enjoy the opportunities that they are given to create their own musical ideas in response to a literary or visual stimulus.
- Numbers of pupils participating in instrumental tuition and extra-curricular activities are low but improving through partnership with the Music Service.

Quality of teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

- Pupils' behaviour and enjoyment in lessons is good. Teaching is confident and working relationships are good. Teaching assistants contribute effectively to lessons and are used very well to support pupils when they are working in groups.
- Curriculum lessons are taught by class teachers. All lessons seen during the inspection were satisfactory or better. In these lessons there was an appropriate focus on participation, practical music making and listening. The best teaching was seen in Key Stage 1 where teachers adapted commercially-produced lesson plans to meet pupils' learning, enabling them to make good progress.
- In some lessons, teachers take a cross-curricular approach, for example combining music and literacy. Whilst learning objectives are always clear they do not always focus precisely enough on the specific musical skills to be learnt.
- Teachers' assessment of pupils' progress is inconsistent. Recordings are not used to help pupils evaluate their work or to help teachers plan further learning.

Quality of the music curriculum and extra-curricular provision

The overall quality of the curriculum and extra-curricular provision is satisfactory.

- The music curriculum is based on two published schemes of work. These are cross-referenced with the National Curriculum programmes of study to show that all statutory requirements are met.

- Music is timetabled every week for all classes, although Year 6 pupils said that they did not always receive their weekly class music lesson.
- All pupils participate together in a short-term singing programme. There is also a woodwind tuition programme which gives all pupils in Year 3 a short taster experience on the fife and the clarinet. The effectiveness of this programme is limited because pupils only experience each instrument for half-a term. A few pupils choose to continue in Years 4 and 5. Additional instrumental tuition is also available on guitar and percussion. While these activities are beneficial to pupils' overall musical experience, they are not coordinated sufficiently to ensure a progressive and coherent curriculum in Key Stage 2.
- All Key Stage 1 pupils participate in an annual musical production. In partnership with the Music Service, a weekly after-school club has recently started to provide opportunities for Key Stage 2 singers and instrumentalists.

Leadership and management of music

The overall quality of leadership and management is satisfactory.

- The school's self-evaluation of music is honest, realistic and accurately identifies what need to be done to improve provision further. You acted decisively in engaging the Music Service to enhance provision for singing and instrumental learning, and to build the capacity of class teachers. This has ensured that all pupils now receive a satisfactory experience and make satisfactory progress.
- The new music coordinator has appropriate subject knowledge and experience. However, there is insufficient monitoring of teaching and learning in music and insufficient sharing of ideas and good practice amongst class teachers, particularly in assessment.
- There is a dedicated music room which is spacious and well ordered. There are sufficient instruments for class music work although many would benefit from updating. While the instrumental teaching programme is helping to raise achievement and increase participation, pupils are prevented from making better than satisfactory progress because some instruments are shared.

Subject issues: Data collection and partnerships

- The school has a good partnership with the County Music Service. In addition to providing vocal and instrumental tuition and extra-curricular opportunities, this has also provided professional development for class teachers, improving their confidence and extending their teaching repertoire.
- Students from the local secondary school have visited Long Lawford to give performances, but there is no curriculum liaison between secondary and primary teachers and pupils do not participate in community music activities.

Inclusion

- All pupils have access to instrumental music tuition and the out-of-school music club. Some class teachers complete records of pupils' progress but there is not a coordinated whole-school assessment process for music. Registers are taken in instrumental tuition and the after-school music club.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed and agreed, included:

- improving the monitoring of the music curriculum and giving further support for class teachers
- building on the success of the singing project beyond this term to ensure that pupils continue to enjoy and make progress in their vocal work
- developing the use of assessment by class teachers, including using recordings to help pupils understand how they can improve their work further
- continuing to increase participation in instrumental tuition and extra-curricular activities.

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

A copy of this feedback will be sent to your local authority, will be available to the next institutional inspection team, and will be published.

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 college. 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

Mark Phillips
Her Majesty's Inspector