

Music Excellence Partner Award Report - Crich Junior School

25th January 2018

Thank you for your very warm welcome when I visited your school last week. The purpose of my visit was to assess whether your school fulfilled the requirements to become one of our music excellence partners. It is always a pleasure to come to your school and witness how music is an integral part of your school on a daily basis.

Having the whole school experiencing music at the same time each week enables progression of musical skills and gives the opportunity to perform in a variety of ensembles. I observed this first-hand during my visit when I saw a Year 3 choir activity, a Year 4 recorder and the rest of the school playing in the orchestra. I was struck by how confidently pupils led the warm-up activities and they take real ownership of this part of the session. It was clear that these ensembles were inclusive of all pupils, including those with special needs. Your school orchestra is exceptional and their performance of a piece especially arranged by their conductor was well played even though they had only just started work on the music.

The youngest pupils in the choir demonstrated an above understanding of musicianship skills and could confidently read rhythm patterns and then identify them in the song they were singing. The choir could maintain 3 independent parts in their 'Yangtze Boat Song'. It was a delight to hear the hand bells being played as an accompaniment to 'Scarlet Lanterns'. Both of these pieces tied in well to the whole school cross-curricular theme of East Asia. The recorder players in Year 4 displayed good rhythmic understanding of the piece they were playing and I am sure they would easily rise to the challenge of hand-signing the pitch of the melody too. Pupils make excellent musical progress in your school.

There are many opportunities for pupils to have instrumental lessons in school with 65% of the school population accessing these on a weekly basis. Musical successes are enthusiastically celebrated with opportunities to perform in Good Work Assemblies as well as in community events and school concerts. In a discussion with a group of pupils, their enthusiasm for music was almost overwhelming. They described how everyone 'gets to have a go' regardless of their ability to play an instrument and that opportunities to perform to the luncheon club were 'brilliant'.

Earlier this month I was invited to take part in your interviews for the Orchestra Pupil Leadership team. The five applicants were asked to lead a warm-up activity or conduct a piece of music that the orchestra were familiar with which was followed by a rigorous panel interview. I was struck by the maturity of these students and the confidence with which they could talk about their musical interests and leadership skills. The cohort was so strong that leadership roles were allocated to all of the pupils.

Opportunities for challenging and stretching talented pupils are carefully planned for and a grade 4 standard drummer has taken the lead on a percussion project. Pupils are also signposted to their local music centre for further extra-curricular opportunities. You always engage in Music Partnership large scale events when they are offered to you, including performing with the Halle Orchestra and taking part in massed choir performances. We very much appreciate your loyalty and support for our work.