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Dear Mr Perrett

Ofsted 2010–11 subject survey inspection programme: personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and students, during my visit on 22 and 23 September 2010 with Margaret Jones HMI, to look at work in PSHE education.

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 without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included: interviews with staff and students; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of students' work; and observation of 10 lessons, two Year assemblies and one form registration.

The overall effectiveness of PSHE education is outstanding.

Achievement in PSHE education

Achievement in PSHE education is outstanding.

- Students have an excellent knowledge of how to stay healthy. They have a very good understanding of the need to exercise and are provided with many opportunities to put this into practice. Participation rates in sporting activities are high.
- Students have a very detailed knowledge of the dangers of drugs, tobacco and alcohol misuse.
- Students' understanding of sex and relationships education is comprehensive with good awareness of sexually transmitted infections and minimising risk. They have opportunities to discuss different types and

contexts for relationships such as civil partnerships, cohabitation, love and marriage.

- They show an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations. In particular, they have a strong awareness of knife crime and e-safety.
- Students make very good progress in developing their financial capability through enterprise projects. Older students have an excellent understanding of career planning; they have clear aspirations for the future and know the steps they need to achieve their plans. Students have valuable work-shadowing opportunities in the sixth form.
- Students' personal development is outstanding. They are given many opportunities to develop leadership skills, take on responsibilities and be part of a team. Students are very confident and articulate.

Quality of teaching of PSHE education

The quality of teaching of PSHE education is good.

- Lessons are planned well; teachers have productive relationships with students and manage behaviour very well. As a result, students are keen to learn and participate, and behaviour in lessons is outstanding.
- A good range of methods including role-play, card games and use of the internet is used to engage and involve students in their learning.
- The specialist team which teaches PSHE education in Years 9, 10 and 11 has good subject expertise and is confident when dealing with sensitive issues such as sex and relationships education.
- In lessons taught by non-specialist teachers, questioning is sometimes superficial and does not challenge students to reflect on deeper meanings and concepts.
- Formal assessment and recording of student's progress in PSHE education are limited.

Quality of the curriculum in PSHE education

The quality of the PSHE curriculum is outstanding.

- The curriculum is rich and provides many opportunities for high quality PSHE education and wider personal development. It ranges from discrete lessons, cross-curricular work in other subjects and a plethora of enrichment activities. They all contribute to excellent outcomes and enjoyment.
- An outstanding programme of assemblies adds to the breadth of PSHE provision. Themes are thought provoking and encourage debate across the school.
- The needs of vulnerable groups are met very well by the wide range of 'pupil services' from counselling to working with learning mentors and the nurture group to improving students' fitness levels.

- The school uses an increasingly broad range of external agencies to support the PSHE curriculum. This includes speakers and specialised agencies.
- Specialist status in both sports and technology make an excellent contribution to the PSHE curriculum through work on healthy lifestyles. Students are able to take accredited courses and qualifications for coaching in sport. Some 60 primary school pupils join the school for food courses and projects. Very productive links with local special schools help students to learn about respect and tolerance.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in PSHE education

The leadership and management of PSHE education are outstanding.

- Senior leaders and managers have been very successful in establishing a high profile for PSHE education across the school. Senior leaders teach PSHE in Years 9, 10 and 11 and act as good role-models.
- Monitoring and evaluation of the different aspects of the PSHE programme are effective.
- The school has an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses and the subject development plan contributes to identifying appropriate priorities for PSHE education.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- developing the training and skills of non-specialist staff who teach PSHE education
- ensuring that there are appropriate assessment tasks and assessment criteria for units of work.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop PSHE education in the school.

As I explained previously, a copy of this letter will be published on the Ofsted website. It may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection. Except in the case of academies, a copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

Davinder Dosanjh
Her Majesty's Inspector