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Mr K Cornforth
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Cornforth

Ofsted 2010–11 subject survey inspection programme: citizenship

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and students, during my visit on 5 and 6 October 2010 to look at work in citizenship.

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 12 lessons and part lessons.

The overall effectiveness of citizenship is satisfactory.

Achievement in citizenship

Achievement and enjoyment of learning in citizenship are satisfactory.

- Students have a generally good understanding of human rights and protest movements, democratic and non-democratic systems, the role of an MP, political parties and how laws are made. They are less strong on the criminal justice system and the roles of the United Nations and Commonwealth.
- Students demonstrate an ability to apply critical thinking in considering topical questions and issues. They often use information and communication technology (ICT) to research topics and are aware of the need to be discerning in their choice of source material.

- Citizenship contributes well to most aspects of students' personal, social, moral and cultural development. Those on the student council and peer-mentors have good opportunities to develop their advocacy skills. Many students engage in local community activities such as sports leadership, recycling projects and the highly acclaimed PGFM radio station.

Quality of teaching in citizenship

The quality of teaching in citizenship is satisfactory.

- Teachers use a range of relevant, up-to-date and appropriate resources, including good use of ICT. In the best lessons, teachers demonstrate sound subject knowledge; have appropriate expectations and use questioning to build knowledge and understanding. However, not all teachers have secure subject knowledge and too much time is spent on low-level tasks.
- Systems for monitoring progress in citizenship are at a very early stage of development; currently assessment is not used effectively to enhance learning.
- Teaching assistants provide a good level of support for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Quality of the curriculum in citizenship

The quality of the citizenship curriculum is good.

- The curriculum is well-planned and the programme is coherent overall. Good links are forged with other agencies and the wider community to provide a range of learning experiences and support students' engagement with citizenship issues.
- The curriculum builds continuity and progression in students' learning by revisiting most key topics within and between key stages to develop work and build understanding.
- A range of enrichment opportunities exists across all key stages, including the sixth form. Out-of-school learning includes the work of the school radio station and links with a school in Uganda.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in citizenship

The leadership and management of citizenship are satisfactory.

- Leaders and managers are aware of the current developments in citizenship and ensure that statutory requirements are met. Senior leaders are ambitious about the role that citizenship can play in the life of the whole school and, to that end, have adopted a delivery model that involves most of the teaching staff. This model does, however, create logistical and quality assurance challenges. Resources to support citizenship are mostly good, although too few teachers have had access to subject-specific training.

- The school has identified enthusiastic subject leaders who seek professional development and have the capacity to support others. However, the quality of subject planning is neither sufficiently thorough nor strategic. Although monitoring is in place in citizenship, it is insufficiently robust to ensure good teaching and learning.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- improving lesson planning to meet the needs of all students
- embedding effective assessment, monitoring and reporting systems
- improving the rigour of monitoring and evaluation to better inform improvement planning.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop citizenship 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

Janet Palmer
Her Majesty's Inspector