

Aviation House  
125 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231  
F 020 7421 6855  
[enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



3 December 2010

Mrs M Lynch  
Headteacher  
Loreto College  
Hatfield Road  
St Albans  
Hertfordshire  
AL1 3RQ

Dear Mrs Lynch

**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 November 2010 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; observation of seven lessons; a presentation on the safe use of the internet and a career fair.

The overall effectiveness of PSHE education is outstanding.

**Achievement in PSHE education**

Achievement in PSHE education is outstanding.

- Students are extremely confident, welcoming and caring. They understand the importance of the shared values within school, and they relate to each other and adults in a purposeful and respectful way. Students are mature, very reflective and constructive when discussing important issues and they empathise with others well, handling difficult issues sensitively.
- Students are able to discuss feelings openly. They understand how to recognise and deal with stress in themselves and in others very well. They value others as individuals and respect their views.
- Students have an outstanding understanding of how to stay healthy. They make healthy food choices and appreciate the need for exercise. They

make full use of the varied opportunities for sporting activities in lessons, at lunchtime and after school.

- Students have a very good understanding of the effects and dangers of drugs, including alcohol and tobacco. They know how to stay safe, both in school and outside. They also know how to use the internet safely.
- Students are making very good progress in learning how to manage their money and they have developed their enterprise skills well. Throughout the school, students are prepared extremely well for the next stage of their education and their future adult life.
- Students' awareness of sex and relationships education is outstanding and they have developed mature, responsible and sensitive attitudes to the subject.

### **Quality of teaching of PSHE education**

The quality of teaching of PSHE education is good.

- Relationships between teachers and students are positive and purposeful. The care, guidance and support for students are outstanding and contribute significantly to students' achievement.
- Teachers are very enthusiastic about the topics they are teaching and they make creative links with other subjects
- Students are encouraged to think for themselves, for example, in a Year 9 lesson, students were considering their progress in different subjects to identify strengths, areas for development and targets for improvement.
- Excellent opportunities are provided for students to take an active part in lessons, for example, the careers fair where they prepared questions and then found the information they needed. However, occasionally, students of differing abilities are not sufficiently challenged.
- Teachers have made a good start to the assessment of some aspects of PSHE education, for example, the work on financial capability, which is beginning to show students how well they are doing.

### **Quality of the curriculum in PSHE education**

The PSHE curriculum is outstanding.

- The recently introduced programme is carefully planned, taking good account of students' views. It makes full use of links with other subjects, while ensuring progression, particularly in discrete PSHE lessons, so students are interested, and appreciate the benefits of learning about issues that are important and relevant to them.
- The curriculum is enriched by an exceptionally wide range of lunchtime and after-school clubs that are supported very well. A wide range of visitors and outside agencies are used very effectively, in areas such as mental health, crime and road safety.

- The programme to develop students' financial capability makes a good contribution to students' economic well-being and their future opportunities in later life.
- The sixth form benefit from a broad and varied programme that meets their needs extremely well. For example, managing their money and opportunities to develop their leadership skills.

### **Effectiveness of leadership and management in PSHE education**

The leadership and management of PSHE education are outstanding.

- The well-informed vision for the subject has led to a drive to develop it further. A strong emphasis on self-evaluation has resulted in a clear and accurate understanding of the strengths and the few areas for improvement.
- Staff readily respond to innovation and they work enthusiastically to develop a programme that is interesting and engaging to students. They have been supported by a broad range of training and a good plan of action to improve the subject.
- PSHE education has a high priority within the curriculum, with a strong emphasis on ensuring that all students are included and succeed. The school makes outstanding use of partnerships, other agencies and resources.

### **Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:**

- developing more assessment tasks to help show how well students are progressing.

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

**Susan Orpin**  
**Additional Inspector**