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Ms D Mashiter
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Mashiter

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 9 and 10 November 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 learners; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of students' work; observations of 13 lessons and one assembly.

The overall effectiveness of citizenship is good.

Achievement in citizenship

Achievement and enjoyment of learning in citizenship are good.

- Students achieve well in citizenship and enjoy their learning greatly. They make good progress due to good teaching. Students at Key Stage 4 have a good grasp of rights and responsibilities and democracy and justice. These are developed and reinforced through a range of appropriate activities and across several curriculum areas. Several subjects provide good opportunities for students to explore political issues around democracy, justice, crime and punishment, although these do not always explore the current context in the UK today.
- Students' political awareness and understanding are good at Key Stage 4 and 5. These are reinforced by events, such as their recent experiences of the general election. Students considered policies within different

manifestos and held mock elections. They used this experience to elect their own representatives on the School Council and consider representing their school on the local Youth Parliament.

- Opportunities to explore the diverse nature of the UK are limited. The school's plans to link with another school in the UK are helpful to increase students' understanding of the diversity in Britain today.
- One of the school's strengths is the range of opportunities provided for active leadership across the school. The work on 'Skillset' development is providing students with a suitable emphasis on developing personal skills, such as leadership skills, through activities, such as mentoring and coaching. The school's 'Passport to Active Citizenship' is used well to help students to focus on recording important transferable skills. However, opportunities for campaigning to make a difference beyond school are less frequent.
- There is less evidence of work on the role and influence of pressure groups and voluntary agencies to help students understand these and inform their views.

Quality of teaching in citizenship

The quality of teaching in citizenship is good.

- Teaching observed was good with a number of strengths. The strong features included: good relationships between staff and students and between students resulting in a positive learning environment; effective use of a range of activities that engages students' interest; good examples of independent and group work; effective classroom management strategies which encourage students' participation; good use of range of strategies including the use of modern technologies to stimulate learning.
- A range of active teaching approaches are used successfully, including role-play and discussion work. Teaching is planned carefully to help develop students' critical skills and enable them to make informed judgments. In these lessons, a seamless approach was adopted where teachers incorporated current and topical issues, without having a negative impact on the integrity and cohesion of the lesson. In some other lessons, teachers struggled to make these links and failed to sufficiently explain and convey the relevant citizenship issues.
- Occasionally, when teaching is less effective, the citizenship dimension is less prominent in the lesson, the subject materials are not made relevant to students' own contexts; as a result, opportunities to explore their own views are less well developed.
- Assessment is good at Key Stage 4 and 5. Although it is developing securely in Year 9, it is yet to be established in Years 7 and 8.

Quality of the curriculum in citizenship

The quality of the citizenship curriculum is satisfactory.

- The curriculum is enhanced through a range of activities, for example: well-planned assemblies, the development of skills in tutorial periods, Super Learning days and a range of trips and visit. These all contribute well to students' knowledge and understanding of aspects of citizenship.
- Activities linked to the school's specialist Visual and Performing Arts status support the curriculum well with evidence that the many young people involved have increased levels of confidence and desire to engage in discussion and debate.
- There is much potential in the school's curriculum model for citizenship learning, through the discrete provision in Social Education programme in the lower school and the cross-curricular delivery across a range of subjects. Consequently, students explore the citizenship processes well in a range of settings. However, the full extent of provision has not been mapped in sufficient detail to identify the core programme for all students, or identify whether any gaps are emerging.
- The curriculum is more secure at Key Stage 4, largely through the implementation of an accredited programme for all students. The discrete element of citizenship provision is good.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in citizenship

The leadership and management of citizenship are satisfactory.

- You and your senior team express a strong vision for citizenship. Significant progress has been made since 2008 in tackling a range of issues around citizenship provision. The school's focus on improving teaching and learning across the school has undoubtedly had a positive impact on the quality of teaching in citizenship.
- Much attention has been given to securing the Key Stage 4 curriculum and useful initiatives, such as the ASDAN or COPE accreditation, have enhanced the subject's status. Curriculum provision at Key Stage 3 has been slower to develop, particularly in Years 7 and 8.
- The subject leader is enthusiastic, committed to the subject and has good specialist subject knowledge. Improvement plans have potential and are appropriate; suitable priorities have been identified. The subject leader is supported well by you and the senior leadership team. Self-evaluation of the subject is accurate in terms of the strengths and areas for further development.
- Monitoring and evaluation processes are not as extensive as for other curriculum subjects at present. The school recognises that this is an area for development.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- mapping all aspects of your curriculum provision against the subject's key concepts and processes
- embedding assessment in Years 7 and 8

- strengthening monitoring and evaluation procedures in the subject.

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

Rashida Sharif
Her Majesty's Inspector