

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



25 November 2010

Mr Tony Cooper
Headteacher
Cottenham Village College
High Street
Cottenham
Cambridgeshire
CB4 8UA

Dear Mr Cooper

Ofsted 2010–11 subject survey inspection programme: physical education (PE)

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and students, during my visit on 15 and 16 November 2010 to look at work in PE.

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 seven lessons.

The overall effectiveness of PE is satisfactory.

Achievement in PE

Achievement in PE is satisfactory.

- The faculty does not maintain accurate records of students' attainment and progress and so has no clear picture of progress over time or that made by different groups of students. Observations during the inspection showed that students' attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is average and for Year 10 core PE students it is above average. No Year 11 core PE lessons were carried out at the time of the inspection. Results in GCSE PE have been broadly average over the past three years. Although students make satisfactory progress overall, their learning in the core PE lessons observed was often good, especially in acquiring new skills.
- Students are given many opportunities in PE to develop personally and socially. Key Stage 4 students say that their work as sports leaders and young ambassadors of sport has improved their communication skills and confidence when working with others. Most students work together well

and are willing to listen with respect to each other's views and opinions. The vast majority of students enjoy PE which is reflected in their mostly good behaviour in PE lessons and their enthusiasm to participate.

- The students interviewed were aware of safety considerations in PE and showed a satisfactory knowledge of how to keep themselves fit and healthy through a balanced diet and plenty of exercise.

Quality of teaching in PE

The quality of teaching in PE is good.

- The quality of teaching in the lessons observed during the inspection ranged from satisfactory to outstanding. Teachers have a secure subject knowledge and use this well to make accurate ongoing assessments of students' learning in lessons and provide guidance to improve their learning. In all lessons, relationships between adults and students were strong and helped create an ethos of respect and courtesy. Where teaching was outstanding, the activities were exceptionally well-matched to the different levels of students' attainment; they were given opportunities to evaluate their own work and that of others, and they were reminded regularly of how to improve their skills. In those lessons where students did not learn as effectively, some were not focused on their work and occasionally disrupted the work of others. Consequently, the pace of learning for some students was too slow.
- Most lessons include opportunities for students to work independently and to cooperate as part of a group. Little use is made of information and communication technology (ICT) to enhance learning in practical PE lessons; in particular there is no use of ICT to exemplify key skills and techniques and for students to analyse their own performance and that of others.

Quality of the curriculum in PE

The quality of the PE curriculum is satisfactory.

- All students experience a minimum of two hours PE each week, with Key Stage 4 GCSE and BTEC students having an additional two hours of theory and one hour of practical work. Students are given a choice of activities at Key Stage 4 to encourage greater participation by those who are more reluctant to take part in PE and sports activities. The College organises a number of extra-curricular activities. Students say that they are popular and well-attended.
- Over recent years, the curriculum has not fully met the needs of some of the students on the accreditation courses. At the start of this school year a number of the current Year 11 students transferred from the CGSE PE course to the BTEC course. Students say that this type of study is more appropriate to their learning needs. However, it is too soon to judge the impact of this on raising students' achievement. Opportunities are provided for students to develop their leadership skills and gain

accreditation at Key Stage 4. However, there are fewer opportunities for leadership at Key Stage 3.

- Students identified as gifted and talented in PE are mentored by faculty staff. They are provided with individual programmes suited to their needs and additional activities to extend their experiences. Students who are most vulnerable, such as those with hearing and language difficulties and medical problems, are given appropriate support in PE lessons by skilled teaching assistants.
- A strength of the curriculum is that it allows and encourages all students to take part in competition, both in school and playing for school teams. Students say that although this sometimes lowers the standards of the teams, it helps students to learn about being rewarded for commitment and a genuine desire to improve.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in PE

The effectiveness of leadership and management in PE is satisfactory.

- The head of faculty leads a team of experienced teachers who are committed to improving pupils' achievement in PE and developing their own skills. A strength is the willingness of all the teachers to have their lessons recorded and discuss with the head of faculty the strengths and areas for improvement. However, the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning in practical and theory PE lessons does not occur systematically or regularly enough.
- All PE staff are involved in supporting the work of the head of faculty in her role as local schools sports coordinator. This helps to improve the provision in PE in the local primary schools and contributes to a more effective transfer of students into the College.
- Teachers know and record the strengths and weaknesses of individual students. However, these records are not collated so do not help the faculty ensure a secure profile of students' progress. No analysis is carried out of the progress made by students overall or by different groups.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- implementing a system to ensure a secure profile of students' progress for different groups of students in all year groups
- establishing a regular and systematic approach to monitoring and improving the quality of teaching and learning in lessons
- making better use of ICT in practical PE lessons to illustrate key skills and techniques and for students to analyse how they can improve their performance and that of others.

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

Roy Bowers
Her Majesty's Inspector