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Mrs M Gallimore
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Gallimore

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 4 and 5 October 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 eight lessons and extra-curricular activities.

The overall effectiveness of PE is outstanding.

Achievement in PE

Achievement in PE is outstanding.

- Results in GCSE PE and Level 2 BTEC sport are consistently above average and there has been a rising trend over three years. In 2010, the proportion of higher A* and A grades gained in GCSE increased significantly. The very positive scores for added value reflect students' outstanding progress. Teachers' assessments for Key Stage 3 show outstanding progress overall and above average levels of attainment, matching the work seen in lessons. A good proportion of students gain accreditation as sports leaders and the numbers are increasing year-on-year as the curriculum develops further.
- Students have a very secure knowledge and understanding of the elements of fitness and approaches to training and most students actively adopt a healthy lifestyle. Students develop secure basic skills at a very good rate. They apply them thoughtfully in game situations to carry out

their planned strategies and tactics effectively. They analyse their own and others' performance confidently, occasionally supported by the use of information and communication technology (ICT).

- Students thoroughly enjoy lessons finding them fun and challenging. Rates of attendance and participation are outstanding and behaviour is exemplary. Many students are highly motivated, persist in practice and show great determination to succeed.

Quality of teaching in PE

The quality of teaching in PE is outstanding.

- Students are highly enthused by teachers' passion for the subject and high expectations. Teachers' secure, specialist knowledge and understanding of learning give them confidence in using a wide range of relevant activities that suit students' different ways of learning. Students respond well to practical hands-on activities, teamwork and problem-solving. Teachers' excellent questioning demands a great deal of students so that they think more deeply and creatively.
- The use of assessment to support learning is outstanding. Clear learning outcomes that cover all elements of the National Curriculum or course criteria are identified in planning and shared with students in lessons. These are usually matched to suit students' different levels of ability ensuring challenge and support where appropriate. Excellent ongoing feedback to students in lessons, through marking and students' full involvement in the assessment process mean they know what they are trying to achieve and are highly motivated to reach their targets.

Quality of the curriculum in PE

The quality of the PE curriculum is outstanding.

- The new National Curriculum framework is used very effectively and innovatively to meet students' different needs and interests and prepares them for a variety of pathways in Key Stage 4. In core PE lessons, these include leadership, creativity, outwitting an opponent and developing healthy lifestyles. A good range of accreditation for PE and sport is offered in Key Stage 4 but there is no opportunity for gaining accreditation in dance. Business and enterprise skills, relating to the school's specialist status, and the high-quality PE outcomes are woven into carefully planned schemes of work so that learning takes place in all these areas very successfully.
- The curriculum is continually reviewed and students' progress and their responses are taken fully into account. As a result, a great variety of activities that appeals to students, including those who are not interested in traditional sports, are introduced.
- Almost all students have two hours of PE within the taught curriculum each week. Plans are in place to increase this further next year. A majority of students have access to three hours of PE and school sport and with the recent extension of the extra-curricular programme to include more

recreational activities, this proportion is increasing rapidly. An outstanding range of extra-curricular activities is offered that leads to exceptional performance in a wider range of activities.

- Additional high-quality enrichment experiences bring excitement and challenge and involve the vast majority of students. These include the 'Cuthies' football World Cup, the Year 10 and 11 Healthy Lifestyles Day, Sports day and the 'Tour de Cuthies', a fundraising event where the vast majority of staff and students completed a high mileage on exercise bikes.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in PE

The effectiveness of leadership and management in PE is outstanding.

- Subject leadership is exceptionally strong and up-to-date knowledge of developments in the subject supports effective and brave innovations. An enthusiastic team of staff is equally strong and lives up to and exceeds the high expectations set by the subject leader. The specialism is fully embraced and ensures that enterprise and business skills are fully developed through activities in PE.
- Self-evaluation is accurate and based on rigorous monitoring of student progress and provision. Students' views are taken fully into account. Professional development is well focused on the needs of the subject and much is achieved through regular sharing of best practice in teaching.
- The School Sport Partnership makes a very strong contribution to the breadth of activities offered in the school. A highly valuable part of its work is focused on encouraging more vulnerable students to gain confidence and build self-esteem through PE and sport.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- providing opportunities for gaining accreditation in dance
- increasing further the proportion of students involved in at least three hours of PE and school sport each week
- developing further the use of information and communication technology to support the analysis of performance.

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

Gillian Salter-Smith
Additional Inspector