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Mr R Meek
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Meek

Ofsted 2010–11 subject survey inspection programme: personal, social, and health education (PSHE)

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and pupils, during my visit on 7 October 2010 to look at work in PSHE.

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 pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work and observation of six lessons and an assembly.

The overall effectiveness of PSHE is outstanding.

Achievement in PSHE

Achievement in PSHE is outstanding.

- Pupils' personal and social development is outstanding. Pupils are caring and considerate towards each other. They have high levels of self-confidence and excellent presentation skills, as demonstrated by the assembly led by members of the Eco club. Behaviour in lessons was excellent.
- Pupils know what is meant by a balanced diet and they have an excellent understanding of the role of exercise in keeping themselves fit and healthy.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and they have been taught how to keep themselves safe outside school. They know how to use the internet and mobile telephones safely. However, they are not aware of all the different types of bullying.

- Older pupils are making good progress in learning about the changes that occur in puberty and the dangers of substance misuse.
- Pupils have sound knowledge about the world of work. They have good opportunities to handle money and take responsibility across the school.
- Different groups of pupils make similar levels of progress in PSHE and those who are vulnerable are well supported by teaching assistants.

Quality of teaching of PSHE

The quality of teaching of PSHE is outstanding.

- Teachers act as excellent role-models. They know their pupils and their families very well and this results in positive and caring relationships in the classroom.
- Lessons are calm and purposeful with clear learning objectives which are shared clearly with pupils. Work is planned carefully to suit pupils with a range of ability.
- Teachers use an excellent range of activities to engage pupils who have different learning styles. Resources are of a high quality and very good use is made of information and communication technology.
- Much informal assessment of progress takes place and increasing use is made of the end of key stage statements. Progress is reported well to parents.

Quality of the curriculum in PSHE

The quality of the curriculum in PSHE is good.

- The curriculum gives pupils ample opportunities to practise their PSHE learning by, for example: being members of the active school council; buddies and monitors and running the Toast Team and the Eco club. Pupils are proud of their responsibilities and carry them out well.
- Outstanding use is made of a range of visiting speakers, residential visits, trips, international links and events to support PSHE learning.
- The Healthy Schools award has made a beneficial contribution by increasing the number of health-related activities across the school.
- Parents are kept well informed about what their children are learning.
- The curriculum is broad and includes discrete lessons, cross-curricular themes, and assemblies. The scheme of work has successfully merged social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) materials with a catholic programme for PSHE. However, this scheme tends to focus on developing skills and attitudes and occasionally lacks emphasis on factual content in some areas. Leaders are aware of these issues and have plans to remedy the situation, for example by linking with the Personal Finance Education Group.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in PSHE

The leadership and management of PSHE are outstanding.

- PSHE is regarded as a high priority by senior leaders and this is demonstrated by the appointment of the deputy head teacher as subject coordinator.
- Self-evaluation is accurate and based on monitoring and evaluation of different aspects of PSHE.
- An ambitious development plan includes more learning about drugs and sex and relationship education and the world of work.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- re-aligning the curriculum to ensure more emphasis on factual knowledge and understanding.

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

Margaret Jones
Her Majesty's Inspector