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Mr D Peaple
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Peaple

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 2010 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 students; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of students' work; and observation of lessons.

The overall effectiveness of citizenship is good.

Achievement in citizenship

Achievement and enjoyment of learning in citizenship are good.

- Students' skills of enquiry, communication and critical thinking are generally developed well. In English, students were able to research and present a persuasive case on a chosen subject and through drama vividly explore and present links between crime, peer pressure, family and the justice system.
- Students from across the ability range talk knowledgably about news and topical issues. They have an understanding of the role of charities as fundraisers and as pressure groups.
- Active participation in school elections, youth parliaments and discussions with notable external speakers further develop students' knowledge, understanding and political engagement.

- Year 12 students are able to exercise a high level of influence over the content of their tutorial programme. This helps ensure relevance and strengthens achievement.
- Positive values and attitudes feature highly across the school. Students understand these virtues and are keen to provide examples of their application within and beyond school.

Quality of teaching in citizenship

The quality of teaching in citizenship is good.

- The school has experienced teachers who contribute willingly to citizenship learning, often through their own subject. Examples of effective teaching included the role of the government in AS politics, the impact of homelessness through drama and exploration of religious tolerance in RE. Scope exists to further strengthen the impact of subject teaching in relation to citizenship education.
- Student assessment currently combines RE and citizenship and is relatively well advanced. Teachers provide verbal and written pointers to students about their levels; parental reports cover students' classroom contributions and progress. Active consideration is being given to improving the current approach to allow a clearer distinction between these two subjects.
- The use of external speakers who often bring a fresh perspective on global, political and community issues is good and frequent.

Quality of the curriculum in citizenship

The quality of the citizenship curriculum is satisfactory.

- The curriculum is broadly conceived and encompasses a discrete course as part of the GCSE philosophy and ethics, the personal development programme, linked subjects and expansive enrichment activities. Additionally, the specialist sports status provides a fertile source for projects, visits and international experiences.
- Democracy weeks, students' fora and mini-elections supplement the curriculum well. Lower-attaining students undertaking an ASDAN award were able to explain the course's citizenship-related elements well.
- Overall however, the curriculum lacks coherence and teachers are insufficiently aware of the subject's key concepts and processes.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in citizenship

The leadership and management of citizenship are good.

- The school has developed a strong community ethos and leaders have enabled a wide, varied and eclectic mix of citizenship-related activities to develop.
- The head of department has made sensible and incremental improvements over the last few years. Although teachers are enthusiastic and committed

to citizenship education, a sufficiently firm core of citizenship expertise is not yet in place.

- Responsibility for the effectiveness of the broader whole-school citizenship programme is defined insufficiently.
- Managers take firm action to tackle teacher underperformance.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- reviewing the delivery of the discrete citizenship programme
- improving citizenship teaching expertise
- reviewing strategic leadership and oversight of 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

Tony Gallagher
Her Majesty's Inspector