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Mr J Hodkinson  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Hodkinson

### **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; and observation of five lessons and an assembly.

The overall effectiveness of citizenship is satisfactory.

#### **Achievement in citizenship**

Achievement and enjoyment of learning in citizenship are satisfactory.

- Achievement in citizenship is satisfactory overall and some students interviewed demonstrated good achievement in their knowledge and understanding of citizenship and in taking action.
- Much of the work produced by students is insufficiently sharp in tackling citizenship objectives. For example, work on 'Britishness' went little beyond an examination of stereotypes and work on the media did not tackle the political dimension that distinguishes the study of citizenship.
- Although some of the best work involves students researching and reporting on topical citizenship issues, for example researching and making a DVD as a 'news report', such opportunities are relatively few.
- Students were attentive in lessons and keen to contribute but, in some cases, the emphasis on processing information meant that discussion was

limited. Students interviewed said that some lessons were interesting and enjoyable, particularly where they discussed topical issues, but in others the material and activities were dull.

- Students contribute to the life of the school in aspects, such as assemblies, and have wider opportunities for participation, for example in a mock general election and a Human Rights day. Those on the school council represent their peers well and are proud of their achievements; some are representatives at the local and national level.

### **Quality of teaching in citizenship**

The quality of citizenship teaching is satisfactory.

- In all lessons observed, good relationships and classroom management were demonstrated. Lessons were very thoroughly planned and resourced.
- In two lessons that were satisfactory overall, the planned work proved too ambitious and lower attaining students found it difficult to grasp the concepts of rights and responsibilities. In a satisfactory lesson on human rights, the emphasis was on acquisition of information and there was insufficient opportunity for reflection and discussion.
- In the two good lessons observed, students had more opportunities to share their ideas and opinions and to complete meaningful activities that reinforced their understanding.
- Teachers plan for assessment of students' work but, as recognised in the self-evaluation, assessments used in the past have not given a reliable measure of progress and attainment.

### **Quality of the curriculum in citizenship**

The quality of the citizenship curriculum is satisfactory.

- The curriculum has evolved in the light of evaluation. The current programme provides a defined core within the humanities in Key Stage 3 and a discrete course in Key Stage 4. Although law and justice receive relatively light treatment in Key Stage 3, the content tackles the range of the programme of study.
- Curriculum planning tends to focus on content, with specific projects identified for development of skills, such as advocacy and campaigning. The intention of the National Curriculum is to integrate these throughout the programme of study: although this happens in some more recent schemes of work, it is not yet consistent.
- In Key Stage 4, it is not clear that citizenship as a non-examined subject has the distinctive aims and objectives likely to make it interesting and enjoyable for students.
- The core curriculum is augmented in a range of ways, including days dedicated to specific topics such as human rights, the environment and the Commonwealth, and opportunities for participation. These also include membership of the year councils and the school council and work done in tutor periods, including charitable activity.

- Subjects across the curriculum have usefully considered their contribution to citizenship.
- Although assessment systems are in place, as analysed in the school's self-evaluation, these are as yet producing erratic outcomes. Greater attention is now being paid to the use of level descriptors rather than mark-based assessment, but these are not being used as intended, for holistic assessment.

### **Effectiveness of leadership and management in citizenship**

The leadership and management of citizenship are satisfactory.

- School leaders recognise the importance of citizenship and have supported subject development as well as citizenship in the broader life of the school.
- Subject evaluation has recognised difficulties with assessment and has prioritised assessment and monitoring in the action plan; however, the curriculum and subject knowledge issues outlined above require more immediate attention.
- Recent changes have brought citizenship in Key Stage 3 within the humanities faculty and this has resulted in new line management arrangements which are giving new impetus to the subject.
- Some teachers do not meet regularly and, in general, there has been little access to training and external expertise.
- Overall, the commitment shown in reorganising the curriculum, moving towards more specialist teams of teachers and promoting citizenship in the life of the school suggest good capacity to improve.

### **Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:**

- developing subject knowledge for citizenship subject leaders and teachers, especially to develop understanding of the relationship of the key concepts and processes of National Curriculum citizenship
- holding regular planning meetings for citizenship teachers to develop, apply and evaluate schemes of work
- considering how to develop effective day-to-day and periodic assessment including the effective use of level descriptors.

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. A copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

**Scott Harrison**  
**Additional Inspector**