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Mr A Chambers
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Chambers

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

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and students, during my visit on 6 and 7 October 2010 to look at work in PSHE education.

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 senior leaders, PSHE staff, a group of four parents and groups of Year 9 and Year 11 students; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of students' work and observation of four lessons.

The overall effectiveness of PSHE education is good.

Achievement in PSHE education

Achievement in PSHE education is good.

- By the time students leave the school, they have developed good social skills and confidence and are able to articulate their own feelings and opinions clearly, preparing them well for the future.
- Older students have a good knowledge of sex and relationships and drug education and how to resist peer pressure. Younger students have a good knowledge of drugs and their effects but a less well developed understanding of issues relating to sex and relationships.
- All students have a good understanding of how to lead a healthy, active lifestyle. Over half the students choose to take part in regular before- or

after-school physical activities and two thirds eat healthy food in the school restaurant.

- The school population is culturally diverse and students respect and celebrate cultural differences.

Quality of teaching of PSHE education

The quality of teaching of PSHE education is good.

- Teachers prepare thoroughly for PSHE lessons and use technology well to stimulate discussion.
- In the best lessons, the quality of teachers' questioning challenges all students to respond in depth and express their opinions.
- In the less successful lessons, teachers talk too much and miss opportunities to develop learning throughout the lesson.
- Good relationships between teachers and students contribute to good attitudes and behaviour in PSHE lessons.

Quality of the curriculum in PSHE education

The quality of the PSHE education curriculum is good.

- The PSHE curriculum permeates the whole school and its focus on developing skills and confidence appropriately meets the needs of students.
- The most vulnerable students are well supported in nurture groups to develop essential personal and social skills to enable them to participate fully in the life of the school.
- The Skills for Success curriculum in Key Stage 3 reinforces key skills such as presenting work to their peers, team work and personal organisation.
- Sex and relationships education is not revisited with sufficient frequency in Key Stage 3.
- The wide range of sporting and cultural opportunities provided in and out of school, such as educational visits, Police Cadets and the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, contributes significantly to students' personal and social skills.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in PSHE education

The leadership and management of PSHE education are good.

- PSHE has a high profile in the school and is well supported by senior staff.
- The PSHE scheme of work is good and takes appropriate account of the low confidence levels and poor social skills of many students when they arrive in school.
- The enthusiastic new subject leader has not had sufficient time to develop a subject action plan or training opportunities for the PSHE team.

- Good links are made with parents and outside agencies to improve student outcomes and enhance their sense of well-being. Many professionals lead sessions during 'stop the clock' PSHE days when the curriculum is temporarily suspended.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring that sex and relationships education is mapped more frequently throughout Key Stage 3
- devising an action plan and staff training opportunities to further develop PSHE.

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

Clive Kempton
Her Majesty's Inspector