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Mr A Mackereth
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Dear Mr Mackereth

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 15 and 16 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 six lessons.

The overall effectiveness of citizenship is outstanding.

Achievement in citizenship

Achievement and enjoyment of learning in citizenship are outstanding.

- By Key Stage 4, students demonstrate secure knowledge and understanding of the subject's key concepts. Their political awareness and understanding is consistently good. Some students demonstrate excellent knowledge, based on their option choices and aptitudes for the subject.
- Students show good independence in their work; they can think for themselves and demonstrate excellent ability to reflect on and evaluate a wide range of topical, relevant issues.
- Students' attitudes to the subject are highly positive; they value the many opportunities to explore various citizenship issues across the curriculum, one Year 11 student commenting that the school's approach is successful because, 'it builds up layers of understanding'. Despite their general

approval, these are discerning learners; some students feel that teachers could occasionally do more to bring out the citizenship dimensions in their lessons.

- The strength in students' achievements arises from the school's commitment to fully use the student voice and empower students to assist in the running the school. Students value that they genuinely have an impact on decision-making. The school's Student Leadership Strategy is prominent and highly successful. Many opportunities are provided for students to lead, support or influence the work of others with large numbers involved. There are many examples of excellent work in school and beyond, from mentoring activities to volunteering, organising charity appeals and leadership activities in a range of settings. Having been trained, students take up these roles with great enthusiasm. Consequently, students' personal development through active participation is outstanding.

Quality of teaching in citizenship

The quality of teaching in citizenship is good.

- Lessons observed demonstrated good teaching across a range of subjects with several strengths emerging. These include: the structuring of lessons to include a focus on citizenship objectives; a variety of approaches to interest and engage students; a willingness to promote discussion and reflection and consistently supportive relationships with students.
- Some teachers are skilled at drawing out how individuals and groups can take action to bring about change. This could be developed further; occasionally the citizenship dimensions are less effectively realised when opportunities are missed to encourage students to reflect on the current context and express their own views.
- The school's revised plans for assessment are promising and have the potential to enable students to reflect, together with their tutors, on their progress and achievements in the subject. However, this has yet to be embedded and further work is necessary to gather evidence of students' work in citizenship across the full range of subjects.

Quality of the curriculum in citizenship

The quality of the citizenship curriculum is outstanding.

- The school's model for the curriculum is varied and complex. There are contributions from a number of sources, including discrete teaching, significant cross-curricular elements, a well-planned assembly programme and several cross-curricular days. Together, this provides a balanced, coherent programme which has notable impact on students' excellent learning and progress.
- The curriculum is suitably flexible in response to local, national and global issues. Assemblies are used well to highlight global issues and prompt reflection on different themes. There is good integration between some elements of PSHE and citizenship in the tutorial session when themes

overlap. For example, work on alcohol awareness also considered rights and responsibilities with good responses evident from students. The cross-age tutor groups provide an excellent forum for discussion.

- Any gaps in provision across the curriculum are identified and adjustments made to the tutorial programme accordingly. This is well illustrated by the unit on democracy and government, which was inserted into the programme earlier in the year to coincide with the general election and provide students with the opportunity to hold their own election.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in citizenship

The leadership and management of citizenship are good.

- You and your senior team express a passion for active citizenship through student leadership and place this at the heart of the school's work. Citizenship in all its many forms weaves across both the formal curriculum and the wider life of the school.
- The commitment of a number of teachers to the importance of implementing citizenship learning across the curriculum has been secured. Teachers demonstrate interest in the subject and the ability to make meaningful connections for students through a variety of subjects.
- The relatively new subject leader is committed, enthusiastic and keen to develop the programmes further. The impact of her work on the quality and impact of the tutorial programme is good.
- Although monitoring and evaluation procedures are secure in terms of the tutorial programme, these processes are underdeveloped across the wider curriculum and do not recognise the full extent of the school's excellent provision.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- securing and embedding assessment procedures through the greater involvement of subjects across the curriculum and providing this information for tutors to use in discussion with students
- strengthening monitoring and evaluation procedures across all aspects of provision.

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

Judith Matharu
Her Majesty's Inspector