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Mr C Bagguley  
Headteacher  
St Michael's Church of England High  
School  
Astley Road  
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Dear Mr Bagguley

### **Ofsted 2010–11 subject survey inspection programme: physical education (PE)**

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and students, during my visit on 19 and 20 October 2010 to look at work in PE.

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 nine lessons and a range of extra-curricular activities.

The overall effectiveness of PE is good.

#### **Achievement in PE**

Achievement in PE is outstanding.

- Attainment is high, and learning and progress are good overall. GCSE results in dance and PE are consistently high although results in GCSE PE are higher for girls than for boys.
- High standards are reached in most activities. Many students represent the town, district or county in a wide range of sports including netball, football, rugby, badminton, swimming, athletics, skiing, sailing and golf.
- In dance lessons, progress is outstanding and students show significant levels of originality and creativity. Students make good progress in PE lessons. Students are fully committed to learning. Levels of participation are high and behaviour is outstanding. Students learn new skills at a good rate and take on a variety of roles, such as peer coaching and officiating, well. Many students take on leadership roles competently but the number

of students gaining accreditation in leadership is below the national average. Students have a very secure understanding of how to adopt a healthy lifestyle and a large majority are regularly involved in extra-curricular activities.

### **Quality of teaching in PE**

The quality of teaching in PE is good.

- Most of the teaching in PE is good. Teaching in dance is consistently outstanding. Teachers' enthusiasm for the subject is communicated well to students and helps to motivate them. Students enjoy lessons and say that they are fun. They appreciate the guidance they get from teachers.
- Teachers' secure subject expertise enables most lessons to be planned well with a good range of relevant activities that engages students and ensures that learning is planned in manageable steps. An increasing focus on students' personal and learning skills is helping to improve independent learning but this good practice is not yet consistent.
- In most lessons, students sustain physical activity well. On a few occasions, the pace of learning slows down when too much emphasis is placed on peer-evaluation at the expense of time for practice and improvement in performance.
- Information and communication technology is used well to support learning in GCSE theory, and to support analysis of performance in dance. It is used less frequently to support analysis of performance in other PE lessons.
- Good assessment procedures ensure that lessons build well on prior learning, that students know the purpose of lessons and that they receive very good feedback from staff and each other. Students know their target grades or levels but these are seldom referred to in lessons, nor are the different levels modelled very often, so that opportunities are missed to personalise learning and, at times, to ensure that more able students are fully challenged. Students' progress in Key Stage 4 core PE is not assessed and recorded so that students' achievement is not fully recognised.

### **Quality of the curriculum in PE**

The quality of the PE curriculum is good.

- The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets students' needs well. Most students have access to at least two hours of PE or dance in curriculum time. Those students who have not opted to take GCSE PE or dance, around half of Year 10 and 11, have less than two hours each week.
- The Key Stage 3 curriculum embraces the concepts and processes of the 2008 National Curriculum well. In Key Stage 4, students are offered a choice of activities and schemes of work underpin progression in the more traditional activities. Local leisure facilities are used to extend the range of activities offered in Key Stage 4 helping to maintain students' interest and

motivation. However, the purpose of each activity and the outcome expected is not set out clearly.

- Accredited courses offered include GCSE PE and GCSE dance. The vocational route through BTEC in PE and Sport is offered to a very small number of students who follow an alternative curriculum. Opportunities for accreditation in leadership, coaching and officiating are increasing.
- An excellent range of extra-curricular activities supports high attainment. The range of activities is widening and involving more students, particularly those less interested in traditional sports.

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management in PE is good.

- Curriculum leaders in PE and a senior manager work well as a team to provide effective leadership. Leaders are enthusiastic and committed to improvement. PE, dance and sport have a prominent profile within the school and the subjects reflect the school's priorities well.
- Accurate self-evaluation arises from secure monitoring of students' progress and the quality of provision. Consequently, the right priorities are identified in improvement plans. Performance management systems are used well to focus professional development and ensure that staff are made accountable for students' progress. Planned opportunities to share best practice through departmental meetings are not always used effectively.
- The School Sport Partnership is making a good contribution to improving the breadth of opportunities offered within the curriculum and through extra-curricular activities. The specialist status as a Performing Arts College is making a highly significant contribution to achievement in dance.

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

- bringing greater coherence to the curriculum in Key Stage 4 so that the purpose of each activity is clear and systems are in place to recognise students' progress and achievement
- improving the use of assessment by linking performance to different levels or grades more frequently in lessons
- ensuring that individuals, especially more able students, are clear of what they need to do to reach their targets within the context of each lesson
- ensuring that independent learning skills are developed in all lessons
- sharing best practice in teaching and assessment more effectively
- making greater use information and communication technology to support the analysis of performance in PE.

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

**Gillian Salter-Smith**  
**Additional Inspector**