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Dear Mr Lassiter

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 6 and 7 December 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 eight lessons and extra-curricular activities.

The overall effectiveness of PE is satisfactory with good features.

Achievement in PE

Achievement in PE is satisfactory.

- School data indicate that students have been entering with broadly average skills in PE as a result of work completed through the school sport partnership in primary schools. In the lessons observed, students were working at the expected levels in Key Stages 3 and 4 indicating satisfactory progress during their time at the school. Pockets of better attainment were observed as a result of well-focused teaching that continuously referenced the next steps in learning.
- Attainment of students completing the BTEC Sport course has been on an improving trend in recent years especially in the proportion gaining the top grades. Good standards and skills were seen in some of the extra-curricular activities such as boys' basketball and older students' volleyball. A small number of students attain levels of excellence and are members of professional football squads or academies of excellence.

- Students acquire a breadth of skills as a result of the improved curriculum. They have good understanding of leading healthy active lifestyles but opportunities to link this with other subjects are missed. Students have some good opportunities to observe, evaluate and improve each others' performances although this is not consistently developed across the department.
- Students have positive attitudes towards the subject reflected in significantly increased numbers participating in extra-curricular activities. All students spoken to said they enjoyed PE and that lessons were fun. Behaviour was good in all the lessons observed and around the PE working areas. Students work cooperatively and have developed a good range of personal and social skills. They listen to staff and each other well although not all students are willing to make verbal contributions in class discussions.
- Leadership opportunities are good across different age groups and students enjoy taking different roles in lessons. Older students' work with local primary pupils, in sport development, festivals and tournaments, supports pastoral care including positive role models at the point of transition to secondary school.

Quality of teaching in PE

The quality of teaching in PE is satisfactory overall.

- The majority of teaching observed was satisfactory although the quality is inconsistent across the department. Where teaching was good students made good progress against the learning objectives because a range of teaching methods, praise, intervention and feedback were used effectively to develop students' skills. In satisfactory lessons expectations of students' capabilities were sometimes too low, work was not always matched carefully to different needs and abilities and students were not challenged to achieve more. At times the pace of learning dropped when there was too much teacher talk and students became passive for extended periods of time or lessons did not have a punctual start.
- All staff have good subject knowledge and used this well to demonstrate tasks and to set clear learning objectives, although not all staff reviewed learning effectively throughout the lesson or at the end to support learning. A good range of resources is available to support students' needs, for example, with different equipment or in developing speaking and listening skills with key vocabulary in different languages or resource cards to prompt productive evaluations. Relationships are very positive between staff and students and between students.
- The department makes good use of the schools four-week induction programme to assess students starting points in PE. National Curriculum levels have been adapted into child-friendly language; stimulating posters have been produced and are prominently placed in working areas. Assessment procedures have been revised well to link with the improved curriculum and schemes of work and staff complete assessments at the end of each unit of work. However, data are not analysed thoroughly or

systematically to monitor students' progress over time and not all students are aware of how well they are doing or what they need to do to reach the next level.

Quality of the curriculum in PE

The quality of the PE curriculum is good.

- The curriculum has been revised successfully and provides a good breadth and balance of opportunities with a good mix of traditional team games and non-traditional activities, such as boxercise and rhythmic gymnastics. Students have good opportunities to select pathways of learning from Year 9 leading to personalised programmes. This leads to positive attitudes, self-motivation and engagement. It is yet to impact consistently in raising standards.
- Schemes of work have been adapted effectively to meet the requirements of the new National Curriculum including links to levels of attainment and assessment information. Activities to extend students' knowledge and understanding of their work include good references to websites and activities to complete at home. Units of work are planned well to support progression although these are yet to impact fully on student outcomes.
- Students access above the expected two hours each week in the curriculum in Key Stage 3 although students in Key Stage 4 currently have only one hour each week. The school plans to increase this from September 2011.
- The curriculum is enhanced well with extra-curricular provision leading to the increased participation in intra- and inter-school competitions and clubs. Good links have been established with a range of local sports clubs and professional academies for students to participate in sport outside school.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in PE

The effectiveness of leadership and management in PE is satisfactory.

- The head of department has identified strengths and key priorities for development effectively and has a clear vision for the subject. Some changes that have already been implemented have led to an improved curriculum and a greater range of opportunities for students. Plans are in place improve the collation and use of data to support self-evaluation. The department works well as a team with clear understanding of responsibilities and accountabilities.
- Systems and procedures are in place to monitor teaching, learning and students' outcomes although this is not used systematically to raise expectations in teaching and spread good practice to bring about greater consistency across the department's work. Findings are not analysed rigorously to bring about improvements in students' attainment and rate of progress or to evidence the impact of initiatives.

- The school sport partnership has had a positive effect in primary schools, provides effective support for secondary enrichment days and has increased the range of resources and opportunities for students. The school's specialist status is apparent in the PE curriculum through the applied learning activities of first aid and leadership.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- implementing thorough monitoring and evaluation systems to:
 - improve the consistency of teaching and learning
 - raise teachers' expectations and students' outcomes
 - inform improvement planning after thorough and systematic analysis of data and findings.

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

Judith Rundle
Her Majesty's Inspector