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Mrs K August
Principal
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Dear Mrs August

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 15 and 16 February 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 10 lessons and out-of-school hours activities.

The overall effectiveness of PE is satisfactory.

Achievement in PE

Achievement in PE is satisfactory.

- Achievement in accredited courses is good because the courses are well-structured and taught and students are well-motivated. Around one third of students take GCSE or BTEC courses and numbers are increasing, particularly among girls. The 2010 results were an improvement on previously low results and were in line with national averages, although the proportion of students reaching the highest grades was low. Taking into account the performance of students currently in Years 10 and 11, achievement in accredited courses is on an upward trend.
- Attainment by the end of Key Stage 3 is low because an above average proportion of students is newly arrived in this country and has very little prior experience of sport and physical education. Most students settle in

quickly and make at least satisfactory progress in PE and sport with some who go on to make good progress and achieve well in core PE, extra-curricular clubs and teams and accredited courses.

- Progress is inconsistent between classes and varies in line with the effectiveness of teaching. Students gain skills and develop confidence in participating in small and full games in a range of sports. Many students are becoming confident leaders and have a secure understanding of how to keep themselves healthy and fit. Attendance and participation in lessons are good. Behaviour is mostly good but there are occasional lapses.
- Teams are particularly successful in local and district competitions in athletics, football, netball and rugby.

Quality of teaching in PE

The quality of teaching in PE is satisfactory.

- The quality of teaching and learning in lessons varies from outstanding to, on occasions, inadequate. Half of the lessons observed were at least good. Relationships between staff and students are positive and supportive. Students say teachers make lessons fun and that they are challenged and learn a great deal.
- In the most effective lessons, teachers use their secure subject knowledge to plan a good variety of activities with suitable steps and stages in learning to support progress. Consequently, lessons are purposeful, students are physically active and learning takes place at a good pace. Students are given good opportunities to develop skills in a variety of roles, such as coaching and officiating, and more able students are fully challenged. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well to support learning in theory lessons and the analysis of performance in practical work.
- In the less effective lessons, low-level disruptive behaviour is not always managed well enough and the pace of learning slows down. Tasks are not planned well enough to support progress in developing skills or understanding the use of skills in game situations. On occasions, there is overemphasis on evaluation of activity at the expense of time to practice and improve.
- The use of assessment to support learning is satisfactory. Clear objectives are set for lessons although relate mainly to performance skills. They do not reflect fully the wider range of skills and competencies that the curriculum is designed to develop, for example leadership, coaching and officiating. Some criteria are too vague and do not make clear what improvement is needed in each skill to reach the next level. Objectives are shared with students so that they understand the purpose of lessons. However, students are not always clear of their longer-term targets and have little opportunity to decide for themselves what they wish to focus on in each lesson or unit.
- The use of assessment in accredited courses is good. Lessons are guided by clear objectives that are linked well to course criteria and grades.

Students know their target grades and what they have to do to reach them. Marking gives students helpful guidance on how to improve.

Quality of the curriculum in PE

The quality of the PE curriculum is good.

- The curriculum for Key Stages 3 and 4 is well planned and based on the principles and concepts of the 2008 National Curriculum. Students are guided towards a choice of pathways in Key Stage 4 relating to performance, leadership, and health and fitness. Recent developments to increase the breadth of activities have improved girls' participation in lessons and out-of-hours sporting activities. Opportunities to experience and gain accreditation in dance are limited. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities have good access to the curriculum and out-of-hours activities.
- The proportion of students participating in three hours or more PE and sport each week is increasing as around half of students, with equal numbers of boys and girls, are regularly involved in out-of-hours activities. All students in Key Stage 3 have access to at least two hours of PE and sport each week while those following only Key Stage 4 core PE have one hour. Students taking accredited courses meet the expectation for at least three hours. The increase in sporting house competitions encourages wider participation. The broad range of out-of-school activities promotes good achievement for gifted and more able students in particular.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in PE

The effectiveness of leadership and management in PE is satisfactory.

- Discontinuity in leadership has held back the pace of change. Staff work well as a team to make improvements. Acting leaders and managers are committed and enthusiastic. They provide clear direction and ensure good day-to-day management of the subject.
- Self-evaluation is largely accurate and based on rigorous monitoring and evaluation of provision and students' outcomes. Planning sets out the right priorities with an appropriate focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning. There are suitable opportunities to share effective practice within the department. A satisfactory capacity to improve further is demonstrated through the increased participation of students and their leadership skills, the improved curriculum and the improving outcomes on accredited courses.
- The department has worked effectively with the school sport partnership to broaden the curriculum and out-of-hours activities, and to increase opportunities to fulfil leadership roles. As a result, participation in sporting activity has increased, especially for girls though not exclusively.
- The Business and Enterprise specialism is starting to have a positive influence on the curriculum and approaches to teaching and learning in PE. The focus on developing students' personal, learning and thinking skills in teaching and learning has been beneficial. Activities to raise

students' awareness of future pathways into sport-related work and careers are successful. Links with Manchester City Football Club have led to improvements in leadership skills among BTEC students. The PE department supports the popular Duke of Edinburgh Award which is led by the specialism.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- increasing the proportion of students reaching the higher grades in GCSE and BTEC courses
- continuing to encourage a higher proportion of girls to take accredited courses in PE and sport
- finding ways to provide more opportunities and accreditation in dance activities
- ensuring that the quality of teaching is consistently good or better
- improving the use of assessment so that:
 - students are more directly involved in identifying personal targets
 - criteria more accurately reflect the breadth of the curriculum
 - criteria reflect progression fully.

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