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Mr M Manley
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Manley

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 9 and 10 February 2011 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 staff and students; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of students' work; and observation of six lessons.

The overall effectiveness of PSHE education is outstanding.

Achievement in PSHE education

Achievement in PSHE education is outstanding.

- Students have an excellent knowledge of how to stay healthy. They have a very good understanding of the need to exercise and living a healthy life.
- Students have a detailed knowledge of the dangers and side effects of drugs, tobacco and alcohol misuse. Older students understand the dangers of drinking alcohol and driving.
- Students' understanding of sex and relationships education is wide-ranging. They have opportunities to discuss different types and contexts for relationships such as homosexuality, cohabitation, love and marriage from different viewpoints.

- They show an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations. In particular, they have a perceptive grasp of e-safety and knife crime.
- Students make good progress in developing their financial capability and enterprise skills through planning a European tour but a minority of students show limited knowledge of personal finances.
- Older students have an excellent understanding of career planning; this is enhanced by work experience and the journey to work programme. Students have clear goals for the future and know what steps they need to achieve their plans.
- Students' personal development is outstanding. They are given many opportunities to develop leadership skills and be part of a team. Students are able to discuss constructively and are very confident and articulate.

Quality of teaching in PSHE education

The quality of teaching in PSHE education is good.

- High expectations from teachers are clearly communicated to students. Thus excellent relationships ensure that students enjoy lessons and behaviour is outstanding. Students are ready to learn and can provide many examples of the value of PSHE education.
- Lessons are well planned and structured with well-focused learning objectives. Students work well in groups, pairs and independently. Good links are made to 'learning talents' in lessons which ensure that students develop wider personal skills.
- Teachers have very good subject knowledge and use a range of stimulating resources to support learning.
- Teachers create a safe learning environment of respect and tolerance so that sensitive and controversial issues are approached in a mature manner. Students listen to others' viewpoints.
- Planned activities in some lessons do not always meet the needs of different groups and individual students.
- There is limited formal assessment and recording of students' progress in PSHE education.

Quality of the curriculum in PSHE education

The quality of the curriculum in PSHE education is outstanding.

- The curriculum is stimulating and provides many opportunities for high-quality PSHE education and wider personal development.
- The needs of potentially vulnerable students are very well met by the wide range of services and support available from counselling, mentors and targeted one-to-one work on raising self-esteem.
- Work-related learning is well organised and targeted exceptionally well to meet the needs of students. There is a strong focus on employability skills

and different career pathways. Alongside this is some beneficial work on challenging stereotypes in the workplace.

- Healthy Schools status has a very positive impact on increasing the number of students who cycle to school, the take-up of school meals and the range of sporting activities.
- Specialist status in both science and languages makes a strong contribution to the PSHE curriculum through work on healthy lifestyles.
- Planning for PSHE education is outstanding with comprehensive schemes of work for discrete delivery. Progression of PSHE into the sixth form is very good.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in PSHE education

Leadership and management in PSHE education are outstanding.

- Senior leaders and managers have been very successful in establishing a high profile for PSHE education across the school. It is placed at the heart of the school and, as a result, students flourish.
- Very effective monitoring and evaluation of the different aspects of the PSHE programme ensure that students' views are taken into account and acted on to improve provision.
- The school has an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses and the subject development plan identifies appropriate priorities for PSHE education.
- Subject leadership is outstanding. Plans, materials and resources are continually being developed and refined.
- Excellent coordination of the different strands of PSHE education is leading to very effective use of resources and expertise.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- assessing more formally students' progress against the end of key stage statements.

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

Davinder Dosanjh
Her Majesty's Inspector