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Mr J Winter  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Winter

### **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 9 and 10 February 2011 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; observation of two assemblies and 13 lessons.

The overall effectiveness of citizenship is good.

#### **Achievement in citizenship**

Achievement in citizenship is good.

- Students' knowledge and understanding are strongest in human rights, prejudice and discrimination and fair trade through their work in English, PSHE, history, geography and religious education. Students at both Key Stages 3 and 4 have a good grasp of rights and responsibilities, and democracy and justice. These are reinforced well through several curriculum areas. These and other school activities provide students with good opportunities to explore issues around identity and diversity, although these do not always provide opportunities for students to explore the current context in the UK today. Other aspects are covered in less detail. More able and gifted students who attend AS-level courses demonstrate an in-depth understanding of the key issues of democracy and justice, rights and responsibilities and identity.

- Students' good understanding of democracy is put into practice through electing class representatives for a number of council or tutor roles. This knowledge is reinforced through events such as mock elections. A similar process is used to elect a head boy and head girl to represent their school on the local Youth Parliament.
- Students feel that the school's use of the student voice is a strength. They appreciate that their voices are valued and have genuine impact. For example, they are consulted about staff appointments, various school initiatives and charity fundraising. This and other work reinforces their understanding of representation and accountability to their peers.
- One of the school's key strengths arises from the excellent opportunities for students to demonstrate responsible action within and beyond the school. Extensive opportunities are provided; many students seize these opportunities with enthusiasm and a sense of pride. The school encourages large numbers of students into leadership roles: as peer mentors for younger students, prefects and young leaders of sport and other activities, which many undertake in their own time.

### **Quality of teaching in citizenship**

The quality of teaching in citizenship is good.

- Much of the teaching observed was good, illustrating a number of strengths. These include: very good relationships with students resulting in a positive learning climate; good use of modern technologies and other resources to stimulate learning; effective classroom organisation and management strategies; high expectations of students' work and contributions in lessons.
- In the best lessons, teachers use a wide range of learning activities which prompt good levels of engagement from students of all abilities. In particular, new technologies are used skilfully to introduce subject material through a variety of carefully chosen media clips. These promote students' interest and stimulate lively discussions. Controversial or sensitive issues are handled well, enabling students to grapple maturely with complex issues of personal and national concern. For example, in a well-orchestrated discussion around 'What's in a name?', students debated gender equality and why some individuals are willing to give up their birth names and others are not.
- Teachers provide a good level of ongoing feedback in lessons which encourages students and prompts their engagement in discussions. However, formal assessment in terms of citizenship learning is underdeveloped.

### **Quality of the curriculum in citizenship**

The quality of the curriculum in citizenship is satisfactory with good elements.

- The time provided for discrete provision at Key Stages 3 and 4 is constrained. Nevertheless, effective use is made of the time available to

provide good learning experiences. Key concepts are identified in curriculum planning; however, the use of key processes is less routinely noted by some teachers.

- Citizenship provision is delivered mainly through the personal and social education programme, English, religious education, history and geography. This involves cross-curricular provision which extends to the tutorial sessions, and the use of flexible learning days. These provide valuable contributions to students' learning. Other contributions are less successful and have only tenuous connections to the subject, including the school's specialist science status. Currently, there is no overall picture of provision as it is not mapped and analysed in sufficient detail. Provision overall may be stronger than it first appears; however, this has not been clearly identified. This makes curriculum planning difficult.
- Students have many opportunities to explore current issues and topical affairs through the personal and social education programme and the school's approach to rewards. Some of the cross-curricular theme days add another dimension to aspects of citizenship as does the 'Weydon Passport' contained in student planners. Further, good links exist with other agencies, local schools and the wider community. These encourage students to involve themselves in local, national and international issues. The school's link with Ghana is particularly strong with two groups of students visiting Ghana for three weeks every year.

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

Leadership and management in citizenship are good.

- At a whole-school level, some strong elements are evident. As noted by the school's most recent inspection report, the senior leadership team, together with teachers, has created a strong ethos for the school which is summed up in its vision statement 'promote respect for ourselves, each other, the environment and the community' in 'Making a difference.'
- There is good commitment from the senior team to provide discrete provision for the subject and strengthen learning. The school atmosphere strongly supports active citizenship; a range of opportunities for this has been identified. The school readily responds to both external advice and internal evaluation of provision, for example strengthening the political literacy component of the citizenship programme. There is recognition of the need to track students' progress more closely in citizenship.
- Students' participation in taking responsible action is monitored well, indicating that a significant majority of the students are involved in at least one activity both in and outside school. However, despite some significant strengths, there are some weaker elements. For example, assessment procedures, and the monitoring and evaluation of citizenship are underdeveloped at present. Though some promising work is under way in English and humanities, this is not securely established across the wider curriculum.

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

- mapping the current provision against the citizenship requirements to:
  - ensure full coverage that meets every student’s entitlement
  - enable a curriculum plan to demonstrate depth and progression from Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4
- improving the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning in citizenship across the school
- developing the assessment of learning in citizenship across the school.

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

**Rashida Sharif**  
**Her Majesty’s Inspector**