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Mr L Spiers  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Spiers

**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 14 March 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 with responsibilities relating to PSHE education, two groups of students, two parents and a group of other stakeholders; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of students' work; and observation of three lessons and an assembly.

The overall effectiveness of PSHE education is good.

**Achievement in PSHE education**

Achievement in PSHE education is good.

- Students have a good knowledge of sex, relationships and drugs education, although to a lesser extent the impact of the longer-term effects of alcohol on their bodies.
- Their personal and social skills in the lunch hall and at break times are satisfactory. Those with particular personal or social needs are very well supported through mentoring and pastoral intervention and make good progress.

- Students develop confidence, self-esteem and empathy for those less fortunate than themselves through a wide range of opportunities across the school including trips abroad, raising money for charity, involvement in the Duke of Edinburgh Award, mentoring younger students, and acting as school ambassadors.
- Students have a good knowledge of financial issues such as debt management.

### **Quality of teaching in PSHE education**

The quality of teaching in PSHE education is satisfactory.

- In the best lessons, students enjoy practical work and engage with a strong focus. They learn to assess each others' work and know how to improve their work.
- In less successful lessons, planned learning objectives do not focus enough on specific, measurable learning gains.
- In some lessons, the teacher talks too much and opportunities are missed for students' learning. Insufficient opportunities are planned to review and consolidate learning.

### **Quality of the curriculum in PSHE education**

The quality of the curriculum in PSHE education is good.

- The PSHE curriculum is well mapped throughout the school and extends beyond the classroom. Knowledge and understanding build year-on-year as each topic area is revisited. Age-related topics, such as driving road safety and first aid, are introduced as students get older.
- Students whose circumstances have made them vulnerable are well supported through bespoke programmes that are rigorously monitored, such as targeted mentoring involving students and their parents.
- Extra-curricular opportunities are well attended and support students' personal development. Transport arrangements ensure equal opportunities for all.
- The PSHE curriculum provides good information, advice, guidance and careers information to ensure that there are no students who leave school without a pathway into further education, employment or training.

### **Effectiveness of leadership and management in PSHE education**

Leadership and management in PSHE education are good.

- PSHE education has a high profile in the school and is well supported by senior staff.
- The scheme of work is regularly reviewed by heads of key stages to meet the students' changing needs. However, students are not sufficiently involved in shaping curriculum review.

- Good continuous professional development is provided for lead PSHE teachers with specific responsibility for teaching key areas, for example sex and drugs education.
- Subject leaders for PSHE education have good opportunities to monitor and support the teaching.
- A significant strength of the leadership and management of PSHE education is its collegiate approach that empowers a large number of key staff to develop specific areas of responsibility and accountability.

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

- ensuring that the curriculum at both key stages has more emphasis on developing students' knowledge and awareness of the long-term effects of alcohol on their bodies
- creating more opportunities within lessons to review students' learning
- consulting students about the content of the PSHE curriculum as part of the annual review to ensure that it meets their needs.

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

**Clive Kempton**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**