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Mr R Moxham  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Moxham

### **Ofsted 2011–12 subject survey inspection programme: citizenship**

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and students, during my visit on 6 and 7 April 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 and observation of six lessons.

The overall effectiveness of citizenship is good.

#### **Achievement in citizenship**

Achievement in citizenship is good.

- Students at both Key Stages 3 and 4 have a good grasp of rights and responsibilities, democracy and justice and international affairs. In part, this is gained through core citizenship lessons together with the GCSE course work. Students' knowledge and understanding are strongest on human rights, fair trade and the work of Amnesty International through their work in PSHEE, geography, history, and religious education. A range of school activities provides students with good opportunities to explore issues around identity. However, they are not provided with sufficient opportunity to discuss diversity, particularly in the context of the United Kingdom today.
- Achievement at Key Stage 4 is variable. There was a dip in students' performance at GCSE in 2010. This was in part due to staffing issues. The school also recognises that a key error was made with citizenship coursework. At AS level, 70% of the students gained at least B to E

grades. In contrast, students performed well at A2 level with 81% of students achieving a pass and 22% gaining a grade B or above.

- A key strength is the work to promote active citizenship across the school and beyond. A range of exciting opportunities challenges and interests students, adding much to their personal development. For example, students' understanding of democracy is put into practice through electing representatives for the school council, members for the student association and the Dover Chambers. This is reinforced through events such as mock elections which engage the whole school. Extensive opportunities are provided which students seize with enthusiasm and a sense of pride. Some of these include taking up leadership roles as mentors for younger students 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.

- Most of the teaching observed was good, illustrating a number of strengths. Some of these include: 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 all students' work and contribution in lessons. 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.
- In some of the best lessons, teachers use a wide range of stimulating activities which prompt good levels of engagement. In particular, new technologies are used to introduce subject material which promotes students' interest and stimulates lively discussions. For example, students in Year 8 research different websites to find information to create a booklet to persuade a 'lazy architect' to change his ways and adopt new eco-friendly designs for his new buildings and towns. 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 the role of NATO in resolving the conflict in Libya, students discussed a number of perspectives as presented in a range of newspapers, to highlight the difficulties faced by the local people and the world at large. Occasionally, when teaching is less effective, the citizenship dimension is less prominent in the lesson and the subject material is not always made explicit to students' own contexts; consequently, opportunities to explore their own views are less well-developed.

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

The quality of the curriculum in citizenship is good.

- Citizenship provision is shared formally with the delivery of Personal, Social and Health Education and informally with other subjects at Key Stage 3. However, some teachers do not always ensure that the key citizenship concepts are identified in curriculum planning. Consequently, the use of key processes is less routinely noted. The cross-curricular provision extends to five collapsed timetable days during the year. Other opportunities are created by students themselves. For example, some students have been active in setting up the Dover Youth Project and Young Chambers and the Dover District Council Fairtrade Committee through the Dover Extended Services. Students organised an exceptionally well-attended event on Fair Trade. These provide valuable contributions to students' learning about world trade and the importance of making a difference within the life of the school and the local community.
- The school's International Award with its well-developed links with a number of countries makes an excellent contribution to global citizenship. The links with France are particularly strong with all students visiting France regularly for a range of cross-curricular activities. Exploration of local issues and links forged with the wider community provide a range of excellent learning experiences within and beyond the school. For example, students raised over £8, 000 for the local Help the Heroes charity. Other contributions are less successful and have only tenuous connections to the subject, including the school's specialist Business and Enterprise status.

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

Leadership and management in citizenship are good.

- At a whole-school level, some strong elements are evident despite some recent staffing difficulties. 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. This is summed up by members of the Students Association, whose vision is to 'promote the student voice and to contribute actively to the environment and the community' in 'making a difference'.
- There is a good level of commitment from the senior leadership team to strengthen the contribution of other subjects to the delivery of citizenship across the school. The school readily responds to both external advice and internal evaluation of provision; for example, strengthening the political literacy component of the citizenship programme and advocacy by involving more students in the life of the school and the local and national community. There is recognition of the need to track students' progress more closely and to map all aspects of provision against the citizenship requirements.

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

- mapping all aspects of your curriculum provision in terms of the subject's key concepts and processes to:
  - ensure full coverage that meets students' entitlements

- enable a curriculum plan to demonstrate depth and progression from one year to another across the school.

- strengthening assessment arrangements in the subject.

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**