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Mr S Hudson
Principal
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Dear Mr Hudson

Ofsted 2011–12 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 18 and 19 May 2011 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 two subject leaders and a group of students; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of students' work; and observation of four lessons.

The overall effectiveness of PE is good.

Achievement in PE

Achievement in PE is good.

- Students make good progress in Key Stage 3 so that by the end of Year 9 the vast majority of them meet or exceed national expectations. Lesson observations confirmed that students in Key Stage 4 continue to achieve well due to the consistently good quality of teaching provided. Students are adept at coaching each other and providing their peers with good quality advice on how to improve. Progress is only satisfactory when teachers plan too much for one-hour lessons or when younger students lack basic batting skills to apply in striking and fielding games.
- Standards in GCSE PE are high; the percentage of students attaining A* to C grades is consistently well above national average and similar results are predicted this year. The proportion of students attaining A* and A grades

fell significantly in 2010; decisive action has been taken to remedy this and results are on track to improve significantly this year. A small proportion of students study BTEC sport; over the past two years all of them have attained either a pass, merit or distinction award.

Quality of teaching in PE

The quality of teaching in PE is good.

- All teachers set high expectations, demonstrate detailed subject knowledge, share good relationships with students and make learning enjoyable. Students participate energetically and enthusiastically and cooperate fully with staff and each other. In most lessons, students adopt different roles such as performer, coach, observer and official to increase their own and others' skills, knowledge and understanding of games. This has a direct impact on their progress, particularly for lower ability students who benefit from additional one-to-one tuition from their peers.
- Teachers' confidence in small group-work and extended two-hour lessons provides students with ample time to acquire, select and refine games skills in practices and drills. Most teachers ensure that basic skills are secured before moving to the next stage of learning. Students are adept at using task-cards with coaching points to assess how well they and others are progressing and readily provide each other with feedback and encouragement when practising. When asked, most can explain how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

Quality of the curriculum in PE

The quality of the curriculum in PE is good.

- All students have two hours of PE each week. In 2010, over two thirds of them accessed three hours of weekly PE and school sport. The Key Stage 3 programme includes regular opportunities to exercise safely, outwit opponents, accurately replicate actions, solve problems and maximise their performance in a range of games, gymnastics, athletics and outdoor and adventurous activities. Assessments made in these areas at the end of each unit of work provide teachers with a good overview of individual students' achievement.
- These arrangements do not extend into Key Stage 4. Students participate fully in a range of games, athletics and fitness activities but assessment procedures are not as rigorous as the earlier key stage. Currently, subject leaders do not accurately collate the progress made by students in core PE. Students can choose to pursue GCSE PE or BTEC studies and a significant number of them train to become sports leaders and organise sport in school or events for primary-aged pupils. They enthuse about the range of after-school sports clubs and regular competitions against other local schools.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in PE

The effectiveness of leadership and management in PE is good.

- The leadership and management of PE are shared jointly between two teachers who work well together and offer good capacity to make further improvements. They maximise the school's first-class sports facilities to provide a wide range of curricular and enrichment opportunities that promotes students' enjoyment and achievement. They ensure that the school benefits from opportunities provided by the school sports partnership and strong sporting links with the local community are developed.
- Thorough self-evaluation gives them a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of PE. This information informs development plans that rightly prioritise improvements to the Key Stage 4 curriculum and to increasing the proportion of students attaining A* grades in GCSE PE. Regular monitoring of lessons and GCSE and BTEC coursework helps to generate consistency in the quality of teaching and promote the standards achieved by students.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- extending the good curriculum and assessment procedures established in Key Stage 3 into Key Stage 4 so that curriculum plans embrace the concepts and processes of the PE National Curriculum and assessment procedures provide teachers and students with an accurate overview of how well they are progressing in core PE
- increasing the proportion of students attaining A* and A grades in GCSE PE by ensuring that the recent actions taken to ensure that students capable of attaining the very highest grades become embedded and by intervening earlier in Year 10 to accelerate the performance of those at risk of underperforming.

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

John Mitcheson
Her Majesty's Inspector