

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



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Mr S Barker
Headteacher
St Pancras Catholic Primary School
Stratford Road
Ipswich
Suffolk
IP1 6EF

Dear Mr Barker

Ofsted 2011–12 subject survey inspection programme: physical education (PE)

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and pupils, during my visit on 4 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 staff and pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; and observation of three lessons.

The overall effectiveness of PE is satisfactory.

Achievement in PE

Achievement in PE is satisfactory.

- From their below average starting points on entry into the Early Years Foundation Stage, the majority of pupils make satisfactory progress, including a large proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. In Key Stage 1, pupils demonstrate good spatial awareness and work safely in groups to develop a range of basic games skills. They thoroughly enjoy PE and continue to make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 2. The school has recognised that for a minority of pupils in Years 3 and 4 some activities need revisiting to ensure that they have secured a sufficient repertoire of generic skills that can be applied in a range of activities in Years 5 and 6.

- Lesson observations show a significant variation in the progress made by pupils taught by teachers and by sports coaches. When teachers use the shared planning resources that include challenging core tasks, pupils make good progress. However, coaches generally use the same lesson plan to teach classes of different age groups. This does not provide sufficient challenge for older or more able pupils and so limits their achievement.
- Teachers make regular assessments of how well pupils are doing at the end of each unit of work but assessment data are not collated to illustrate how many achieve National Curriculum expectations by the end of Year 6. Swimming records shows that over the past two years, fewer than three quarters of pupils are able to swim the expected 25 metres by the end of Key Stage 2. The school is tackling this so that pupils, this year, unable to swim after two terms of lessons in Year 5 will continue to attend swimming lessons in Year 6 to ensure that they meet minimum expectations.

Quality of teaching in PE

The quality of teaching in PE is satisfactory.

- The majority of lessons include vigorous warm-ups which encourage pupils to work hard for sustained periods of time. Teachers and coaches share good relationships with pupils and manage their behaviour well. They actively engage them by planning enjoyable activities using a good range of equipment. In the most effective lessons, activities are varied to meet the needs of less able pupils and to provide sufficient challenge for the most able. For example, in a tennis lesson pupils altered their own practice drills to make them easier or harder to do.
- Most lessons are taught by class teachers. This is complemented by external coaches who teach three lessons each week. Lessons taught by coaches are less effective because they rely too much on whole-class teaching which restricts opportunities for pupils to learn independently and does not encourage them to think for themselves or to select and apply skills suited to specific activities.
- Assessments made at the end of each half-term provide teachers with an overview of how well pupils are achieving in each activity but do not provide pupils with an understanding of how well they are doing in PE overall. Pupils are unaware of what level they are working at or what they need to do to improve their work. The new 'milestones', developed to help pupils gauge their own progress, are ready for implementation later this year and should help to improve this.

Quality of the curriculum in PE

The quality of the curriculum in PE is good.

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have daily sessions of physical activity and a weekly lesson of PE. In Key Stages 1 and 2, all pupils receive two hours of PE each week. Records show that the vast majority access three hours of PE and sport weekly. Pupils enthuse about

the range of games, gymnastics, dance, athletics and swimming lessons provided for them. A wide range of games activities is taught across both key stages. Scope exists to reduce this proportion to ensure that sufficient time is allocated to fully meet or exceed expectations in other areas of activity.

- A wide range of enrichment activities before, during and after school complements the curriculum well. This range is enhanced further by an annual healthy living week, a residential experience for Year 6 pupils, sports day and regular competitions with other schools. During lunchtimes, 'playground buddies' provide an excellent range of small games and activities which appeals to the vast majority of pupils and adds significantly to their achievement and enjoyment.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in PE

The effectiveness of leadership and management in PE is satisfactory.

- The subject leader is a knowledgeable and effective teacher of PE and is highly motivated to drive further improvements in the subject. She has focused her efforts on embedding planning resources across the school and providing colleagues with clear guidance on lesson planning, teaching and the assessment of pupils' progress. Lesson plans are monitored each half term which is leading to greater consistency and quality. Every opportunity is taken to raise the profile of the subject by ensuring that pupils' achievements in PE and sport are regularly celebrated in school.
- Self-evaluation is used effectively to inform improvement planning. Observations of lessons are not carried out regularly and, as a result, the school does not have a clear view of the overall quality of teaching. The effective joint planning carried out between teachers does not extend to external coaches which has an adverse effect on the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- regularly monitoring PE lessons taught by teachers and coaches to identify the overall strengths and weaknesses of teaching, and their impact on pupils' achievement
- clarifying assessment and recording procedures so that pupils have a clear understanding of how well they are achieving and know what to do to meet or exceed national expectations
- embedding new arrangements to ensure that the vast majority of pupils can swim 25 metres by the end of Key Stage 2.

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