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20 October 2011

Mr G Wakeling
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Dear Mr Wakeling

Ofsted 2011–12 subject survey inspection programme: personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE)

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and students, during my visit on 5 and 6 October 2011 to look at work in PSHEE.

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, including five joint observations.

The overall effectiveness of PSHEE is good.

Achievement in PSHEE

Achievement in PSHEE is good.

- Students' personal development is outstanding. They form open and respectful relationships and grow in confidence and maturity during their time in school.
- Most students have positive attitudes towards PSHEE lessons and enjoy opportunities to debate issues to deepen their understanding. They have a good knowledge and understanding of what is meant by a healthy, balanced diet, have access to a wide range of healthy choices and are knowledgeable about the benefit of exercise.
- Students understand the risks associated with smoking, drugs and alcohol and have good knowledge of sexual health issues. They have the opportunity to understand and respect different types of relationships.

- Students have a good understanding of bullying and the effects on physical and mental health. They have more limited opportunity to discuss and research issues linked to homophobic bullying.
- Students' social responsibility is well developed through the active 'student voice'. Their views and opinions are listened to and acted on. For example, the students' food council provides regular feedback, and the school council influences developments to improve the school environment.
- Students' financial awareness and capability are less well developed in preparing them for economic choices and decisions in the future.

Quality of teaching in PSHEE

The quality of teaching in PSHEE is good.

- Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and confidence in teaching PSHEE. Outside speakers, such as magistrates and the police, bring a wider range of expertise and life experiences which students appreciate.
- Teachers create a safe learning environment for students to express and explore their views and feelings.
- Schemes of work and lessons are well planned with a good variety of tasks to engage and involve students. Although teachers provide good-quality support, resources are not always adjusted to meet the full range of students' needs.
- Assessment is integral to lesson planning, supported by end-of-unit tests for some topics. Students are increasingly involved in self and peer-assessment. However, there is no formal teacher assessment or recording of students' knowledge and understanding of discrete aspects of PSHEE. Teachers use a helpful bank of statements to provide a summative report to parents and carers.

Quality of the curriculum in PSHEE

The quality of the curriculum in PSHEE is good.

- Designated curriculum time is complemented well by planned cross-curricular contributions, form time and assemblies.
- Careers education, information, advice and guidance are readily available from Year 9 for students to explore their next steps. Staff work effectively with Connexions to target students at risk of not accessing employment, education or training when they leave school. This has proven to be a very successful approach. Careers education is not as well developed in Years 7 and 8.
- Involvement in the Healthy Schools programme has had a positive impact on healthy eating and the promotion of exercise. The success of this initiative has led to participation in the local 'Going for Gold' programme to consolidate improvements and support further development of the PSHEE programme.

- A wide range of extra-curricular activities and leadership responsibilities provides excellent opportunities for students to apply and practise their personal and social skills. The school and food councils enable students to experience democracy at work, and appreciate how they can influence decisions.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in PSHEE

The effectiveness of leadership and management in PSHEE is good.

- PSHEE has a high profile in the school, promoted effectively by senior leaders and specialist middle leaders. Staff and students are very clear that personal development is crucial if learners are to thrive and make the most of their opportunities in school.
- Strong commitment and drive are shown in developing the different strands of the programme. However, leadership responsibilities are not fully coordinated to ensure coherence and progression across the age range.
- Leaders have been particularly successful in promoting healthy lifestyles through effective work with students and the school's catering service to enhance the lunchtime experience.
- Self-evaluation is broadly accurate. However, the monitoring of teaching and learning does not follow the rigorous approach implemented for other subjects.
- Good progress has been made to establish a small and committed team of experienced teachers to deliver the PSHEE programme.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- reviewing and strengthening provision to promote students' financial capability
- implementing a system of teacher assessment for all strands of the programme to ensure coherence and progression across the school
- ensuring that provision and teaching and learning for PSHEE are monitored and evaluated rigorously.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop PSHEE in the school.

As 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. A copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

Nada Trikić
Her Majesty's Inspector