

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

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



2 November 2011

Miss Anne Heywood
Headteacher
Abbots Langley School
Parsonage Close
Abbots Langley
Hertfordshire
WD5 0BQ

Dear Miss Heywood

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

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and pupils, during my visit on 19 October 2011 to look at work in PSHE.

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; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of seven lessons.

The overall effectiveness of PSHE is good.

Achievement in PSHE

Achievement in PSHE is good.

- Pupils have a clear understanding of the importance of a balanced diet but this is not always reflected in the food they eat at lunchtime. They know that exercise is vital for physical health.
- Pupils showed a good knowledge of how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations. They are aware of dangerous substances in the home, such as medicines they must not touch but have more limited understanding of the effects of smoking and alcohol.
- Pupils know about the different sorts of bullying and they have been able to find their own solutions to some bullying issues by working through the very active school council.

- Older pupils know about the physical and mental changes that take place when growing up. A less well-developed area of understanding is personal finance; managing pocket money and knowledge of the world of work.
- Personal development is good. Pupils have good speaking and listening skills. They are articulate and confident to express their views. They are friendly, well-mannered and supportive of each other. They take on a range of responsibilities around the school; for example, mentoring younger pupils and acting as play leaders. They are positive about PSHE and enjoy debate and sharing ideas. Many are able to reflect on issues and evaluate the quality of their work.

Quality of teaching in PSHE

The quality of teaching in PSHE is good.

- Lessons are characterised by warm relationships and secure discipline. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and they are confident to deal with sensitive topics.
- A range of techniques is used, including circle time, role-play and group work, which enhances the pupils' enjoyment of their learning. Group work in some classes requires more structure and support to be completely successful.
- Children's progress is assessed well in the Reception classes. For older pupils the local authority assessment scheme is used but this tracks the progress of the class as a whole and not individual progress.

Quality of the curriculum in PSHE

The quality of the curriculum in PSHE is good.

- A strong feature of the curriculum is the 'Thunks' time which gives pupils an opportunity to reflect deeply on issues related to PSHE and express their views. Pupils enjoy the challenge of this activity.
- Long-term planning and lesson planning are of good quality; duplication of topics is effectively eliminated and continuity is ensured.
- Pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable are supported well through the use of play therapy and a nurture club.
- Good use is made of a range of external speakers to enhance provision. Extra-curricular activities, such as Show Racism the Red Card, sports clubs and special days, make a very strong contribution to learning.
- The views of pupils and parents are taken seriously and acted upon through the work of the school council and the parents' forum.
- The school recognises the need to develop work in economic well-being and this forms part of the school's development plan.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in PSHE

The effectiveness of leadership and management in PSHE is good.

- PSHE is monitored well by learning walks, checking planning and talking to pupils. The school's evaluation of the quality of lessons during the inspection was accurate and development plans are in place which identify appropriate areas for improvement.
- PSHE enjoys a high status in the school and receives good support from the senior leadership team and the governors. A governor takes specific responsibility for supporting the subject. High-quality displays throughout the school reinforce learning.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- improving pupils' knowledge of economic well-being by ensuring that these aspects are covered in the curriculum
- ensuring that individual progress is monitored in Years 1 to 6.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop PSHE 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

Margaret Jones
Additional Inspector