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Miss M Ponting
Headteacher
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Dear Miss Ponting

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 2 November 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 three lessons.

The overall effectiveness of PSHE is good.

Achievement in PSHE

Achievement in PSHE is good.

- Pupils are confident, thoughtful and considerate to each other. They work together very well, listen to each other carefully and value the contributions of others.
- Pupils have a good knowledge of different emotions and they are able to identify, discuss and manage their feelings well. They recognise when others are feeling left out and know how to make sure everyone is included in work and play. They are less sure about recognising and dealing with stress.
- Pupils are making good progress in learning how to stay safe. For example, they know how to perform safely in physical education. They know how to assess potentially risky situations, and they know what to do

if bullied by others. They have a good understanding of the dangers and effects of drugs, including tobacco and alcohol. Older pupils have a very good knowledge about how the body changes during puberty and the importance and value of family relationships.

- Pupils know what makes a balanced diet. They understand the importance of eating five fruit and vegetables a day and the need to drink water regularly. They know that exercise is essential, although some are less clear about why it is important. They play energetically and many take part in a wide range of after-school sporting activities.
- Older pupils are well prepared for their future adult lives, but some are less well informed on how to manage pocket money.
- All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress in these areas.

Quality of teaching in PSHE

The quality of teaching in PSHE is good.

- Teachers have purposeful and productive relationships with pupils. They manage behaviour well, so that lessons run smoothly. Lessons are planned carefully to provide a wide variety of activities. For example, teachers often use discussion in pairs or groups to help pupils think for themselves and develop their ideas. In one lesson, where pupils were sorting pictures into those that are drugs and those that are not, pupils were able to discuss with others and identify where they needed to find out more.
- Teachers make good use of questions to help pupils develop and extend their understanding. However, occasionally there is not enough clarity about the purpose of the lesson, so time is not used as well as it might be.
- Teaching assistants make a good contribution to lessons by providing specific help to individuals and groups of pupils, especially those who are less able. Sometimes there is not enough challenge for the most able pupils in the class.
- Assessment is at an early stage of development and does not show how well pupils are doing or what they need to do next to improve.

Quality of the curriculum in PSHE

The quality of the curriculum in PSHE is good.

- Pupils benefit from a very well-planned programme, which ensures that they cover an interesting and wide range of topics relevant to them. However, there is insufficient focus on developing pupils' understanding of the world of work, and extending their skills in managing their pocket money.
- The programme for sex and relationships education is very good and has been developed through careful consultation with parents.

- The use of social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) materials is incorporated effectively, helping to support and improve pupils' emotional development.
- The programme for drug education is very effective and has helped pupils' awareness of the dangers and effects of a wide range including tobacco and alcohol.
- The school achieved Healthy Schools status a few years ago. The impact can be seen in pupils' awareness of issues such as healthy eating and bullying.
- Good use is made of a wide range of trips and visitors to make learning more relevant and enjoyable, and to provide experiences where pupils can put their learning into practice. Pupils benefit from good opportunities to take responsibility. For example, some are buddies who are trained to help younger children at playtimes and lunchtimes.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in PSHE

The effectiveness of leadership and management in PSHE is good.

- Leadership of the area is well informed and enthusiastic. PSHE is strongly supported by senior managers, and is a very high priority in the school.
- A clear vision for developing PSHE and an accurate understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement are reflected in the subject action plan, although target areas need to be made clearer.
- The subject review has evaluated areas for development well and has been used to inform future plans. Good improvements have been made to the subject, including the improvement of programmes for sex and relationships education, and drug education.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- planning lessons to ensure that the purpose of the lesson is clear and that there is sufficient challenge for more able pupils
- developing more assessment tasks.

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

Susan Orpin
Additional Inspector