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Mr A Prindiville
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Prindiville

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 9 and 10 November 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 students; scrutiny of relevant documentation; observation of teaching and learning across the department with senior staff; and observation of nine lessons.

The overall effectiveness of PE is good.

Achievement in PE

Achievement in PE is good.

- A review of very detailed assessments and lesson observations confirm that students enter the school with skills in PE that are in line with national expectations. Progress across Key Stages 3 and 4 is good and those following the GCSE PE course attain above average standards as a result of outstanding teaching. The small number of students who study PE at both AS and A level display good levels of performance and attain standards that are above national averages.
- The vast majority of students achieve well in not only their physical but personal and social development. A steadily increasing number of students attain qualifications and awards in PE and sport. The school has a history

of success in several inter-school competitions and a number of students have gained individual success in a variety of sporting disciplines. Participation rates in competitive sport are high. Over half take part in sporting activities outside of lessons and many demonstrate growing levels of awareness about how to maintain a healthy and active lifestyle.

- Students demonstrate outstanding levels of enthusiasm for PE. Behaviour in lessons is extremely good and they show respect for each other in sport-related activity. For example, students help and encourage those who are less able at PE and reflect about the performance of others. Those taking the sports leader awards in Key Stages 4 and 5 develop in confidence as they teach a range of PE skills to younger pupils from local primary schools.

Quality of teaching in PE

The quality of teaching in PE is good.

- Teaching and learning are good and often outstanding. All lessons are well managed and the vast majority move along at a brisk pace, especially when teachers make very good use of resources in lessons. For example, in an outstanding Year 11 lesson, the teacher made highly effective use of multimedia presentations to support key teaching points and fully engage students in active learning. However, not all teachers use information and communication technology (ICT) regularly to illustrate key teaching points or review the performance of students in at the end of lessons. All teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge and use questions well to check students' understanding.
- Planning is consistently good across the department. Learning intentions are clearly identified and, generally, tasks are designed to meet the needs of students of differing abilities. However, the needs of the most able are not always met well in some lessons because they are often directed to work with those students who are less able than themselves rather persevering with more challenging tasks that improve their own levels of performance.
- The quality of assessment is outstanding. All students are asked to make a self-assessment of their ability to apply specific skills at the start of each lesson. Students are encouraged to reflect on their own performance and that of others at the end of the lessons. This information is then used to inform detailed records of progress and generate targets for improvement.

Quality of the curriculum in PE

The quality of the curriculum in PE is good.

- A broad, balanced and inclusive curriculum is suitably enriched by an extensive range of extra-curricular sporting activities including an inter-house sports day. Students speak very highly about this event because school staff manage it professionally, making them feel like real athletes for the day. All students are encouraged to participate in inter-house sporting events and many take part in competitive matches against other

schools. In all key stages, students participate in at least two hours of PE and sport each week. In addition students in Key Stage 4 can choose to follow GCSE PE or BTEC sport.

- All staff provide high-quality support and guidance for vulnerable students and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. These students respond very well to this support and attain equally as well as others. The breakfast club provides further opportunities for them to participate in sport. Gifted or talented students speak very highly about the support and guidance given to them so that they may reach their full potential in PE and sport.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in PE

The effectiveness of leadership and management in PE is good.

- The department is led effectively by a dedicated and outstanding teacher. Senior leaders value the role that PE plays in establishing an extremely positive climate for learning within the school. Self-evaluation is accurate because assessment data and regular monitoring of teaching and learning are used well to accurately identify strengths and weaknesses and inform development planning.
- Good partnerships have been established with local sporting clubs, the school sports partnership and local primary schools. The quality and range of resources for PE are good overall. The school's existing PE facilities have been improved with an excellent new all-weather games area.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring that more able students are fully challenged in all lessons to increase their levels of performance and achievement
- making more effective use of ICT to further support the teaching and assessment of PE.

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

Yours sincerely

Philip Mann
Her Majesty's Inspector