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Mr S Bell
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Dear Mr Bell

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 2 and 3 November 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 nine lessons and two form-time sessions.

The overall effectiveness of PSHEE is outstanding.

Achievement in PSHEE

Achievement in PSHEE is outstanding.

- Students have an excellent knowledge of how to live a healthy and safe lifestyle. They appreciate the need to exercise regularly which is shown in the high participation rates in the junior sports leadership award. They have very detailed knowledge of the dangers of drugs, tobacco and alcohol and understand the social and physical effects of substance misuse.
- Students' understanding of sex and relationships education is comprehensive with good awareness of sexually transmitted infections and minimising risk. They have opportunities to discuss different types of relationships.

- Students make very good progress in developing their financial capability through enterprise projects. They have a detailed knowledge about how to manage money, savings and credit. Students have an excellent understanding of careers and what steps they need to take to achieve their ambitions.
- Students' personal development is exceptional. Students are given many opportunities to develop leadership and presentation skills, take on responsibilities and be part of a team. Students are confident and articulate. They respect differences and show maturity when listening to the views of others.

Quality of teaching in PSHEE

The quality of teaching in PSHEE is outstanding.

- Lessons are consistently well planned and teachers have excellent relationships with students. As a result, students are keen to learn and participate, which leads to outstanding behaviour in lessons.
- Innovative resources ensure that students are fully engaged in their learning and they display highly effective skills when working in groups. Thought-provoking questions, video clips and case studies are used well to initiate discussion.
- At the start of lessons, learning objectives are made clear and there are frequent checks on understanding. Lessons finish on a strong note with a review of what students have learnt.
- Teachers display excellent knowledge of PSHE and skilfully manage discussions on sensitive and controversial issues. They take great care to ensure that a wide range of students makes a contribution in lessons.
- In the outstanding lessons, students are responsible for their own learning and show high levels of independence, cooperation and self-reflection.
- In the good lessons, teachers tend to talk for too long so not enough time is spent on the main activity.

Quality of the curriculum in PSHEE

The quality of the curriculum in PSHEE is outstanding.

- The curriculum provides a wealth of opportunities for high-quality PSHE education and wider personal development. It includes cross-curricular work in other subjects, PSHE and pastoral days and an abundance of enrichment activities. All contribute to excellent outcomes and students' enjoyment.
- Planning for PSHE education is thorough with detailed schemes of work and a coherent overview of the different strands.
- Sixth-form students are well prepared for higher education and future life, due to a well-organised careers programme. Provision for PSHE education in the sixth form is excellent and students have many opportunities to focus on personal development.

- Specialist status in both science and information and communication technology makes an excellent contribution to the PSHE curriculum. The work on e-safety is comprehensive and thus students have an excellent level of understanding of how to be safe. Science provides an impressive range of opportunities for students to manage projects, budgets and develop leadership and problem-solving skills.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in PSHEE

The effectiveness of leadership and management in PSHEE is outstanding.

- PSHE education has a very high profile and status across the school. A strong ethos promotes personal development and well-being. This is noticeably evident in the excellent relationships and the welcoming and inclusive nature of the school.
- Exciting experiences are provided by, for example, projects with a high school in Ghana, and sixth-form students completing work experience in France.
- Subject leadership is strong and has the confidence and whole-hearted commitment from students and staff. Coordination of the different aspects of PSHE education in the school is excellent. The track record of evaluation and improvement planning is strong, leading to outstanding academic and personal achievement.
- Highly effective use is made of links with external agencies in providing many opportunities, wider experiences and benefits for students.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- sharing the good practice in teaching and learning more widely.

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

Davinder Dosanjh
Her Majesty's Inspector