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24 November 2011

Ms N Shore  
Headteacher  
The Banovallum School  
Boston Road  
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Dear Ms Shore

### **Ofsted 2011–12 subject survey inspection programme: citizenship**

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and students, during my visit on 16 and 17 November 2011 to look at work in citizenship.

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 eight lessons, a Student Leadership Team meeting and an assembly.

The overall effectiveness of citizenship is good.

### **Achievement in citizenship**

Achievement in citizenship is good.

- Students have a good understanding of most key concepts within the curriculum. They are particularly strong on rights and responsibilities, identity and diversity, the law and justice system and issues surrounding the environment and sustainability. The recent elections for house captains have strengthened students' understanding of democracy and representation.
- Students are eager, enthusiastic learners. They enjoy the active nature of most lessons, responding positively to the many opportunities for discussion. They demonstrate excellent communication skills, offer their opinions thoughtfully and listen respectfully to those of others. Students enjoy supportive relationships with adults and each other which promote full and frank discussions of sometimes controversial issues.

- A significant strength of the school is the attention paid to developing student leadership. In particular, the newly revised house system supports this very effectively. A very large number of students actively support the school and eagerly take up responsibilities to lead the work of their peers and influence school improvement. They take up wide-ranging roles, including as members of the head boy and girl team, as house captains, prefects, school council representatives and sports leaders. These roles have status and significance in school and are positively regarded by students. Consequently, students' personal development through active citizenship is outstanding.

### **Quality of teaching in citizenship**

The quality of teaching in citizenship is good.

- The teaching observed was consistently good, illustrating a number of strengths. These include: very good relationship with students resulting in a positive learning climate; good use of technologies and suitable resources to stimulate learning; effective classroom organisation; high expectations of students' work, behaviour and contributions in lessons and a good level of challenge provided.
- Teachers confidently use a wide range of stimulating learning activities which prompts good levels of engagement. They are skilful in promoting students' interest and stimulating lively discussions. For example, in a highly successful drama lesson, Year 8 students considered issues around human rights and responsibilities with enthusiasm, expressing thoughtful comments on the relevant themes.
- Occasionally, teachers talk too much: consequently, opportunities for all students to contribute and explore their own views are less well developed.

### **Quality of the curriculum in citizenship**

The quality of the curriculum in citizenship is good.

- Citizenship provision is complex with a number of contributory elements, but nonetheless effective. Although all strands are currently mapped in some form, revision of this with close attention to the work being covered across the wider curriculum will ensure greater coherence and progression and avoid duplication. Overall, however, curriculum provision is having good impact on students' knowledge and understanding.
- The work developing through Key Stage 3 in drama is exciting. This strikes an important balance between discussion of the issues and exploration of these through drama activity so that students' knowledge of citizenship concepts is secure.
- Many subjects across the curriculum make strong contributions to citizenship learning, particularly religious studies, physical education, history, geography, science and English. Occasionally, when the citizenship dimension is less prominent in the lesson, the subject material is not

suitably enhanced by consideration of today's context and some potentially powerful reinforcement of citizenship learning is missed.

- A range of whole school approaches supports learning in citizenship well, including effective partnership work with external agencies and visitors into school, theme days and constructive use of form times. Assemblies also contribute strongly with excellent contributions from students; for example, the effective and thought-provoking anti-bullying assembly observed, led by yourself and the head boy and girl team. The well-established vertical tutoring system adds much to the excellent cohesion and sense of teamwork evident across the student body.

### **Effectiveness of leadership and management in citizenship**

Leadership and management in citizenship are satisfactory.

- You and the senior leadership team are clearly committed to strengthening provision for the subject and have ambitious plans for further curriculum development. The recent curriculum developments at Key Stage 3 are indicative of this. Further, the promotion of active citizenship leads to impressive outcomes.
- The use of student voice and strategies to promote student leadership are strengths of the school. Consequently, students are proud of their school; they feel they have a voice that is heard and acted upon.
- Self-evaluation is accurate. School leaders are aware that despite some significant strengths, there are some weaker elements. For example, assessment is at an early stage of development and requires consolidation. Monitoring and evaluation procedures in citizenship are underdeveloped at present.

### **Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:**

- mapping the curriculum provision in detail to ensure coherence and progression in learning
- embedding assessment procedures to include recognition of active citizenship
- ensuring monitoring and evaluation activities across the curriculum include a focus on citizenship.

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

**Judith Matharu**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**