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Mrs A Wright
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Dear Mrs Wright

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

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and pupils, during our 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 five lessons and an assembly.

The overall effectiveness of PSHE is inadequate.

Achievement in PSHE

Achievement in PSHE is satisfactory.

- Pupils' achievement in PSHE is strong in some areas, but inadequate in others.
- Pupils understand how to lead a healthy lifestyle. They demonstrate from an early age the importance of a balanced diet and the role exercise plays in maintaining physical health and well-being. They engage enthusiastically in sport and extra-curricular activities, particularly the annual health and sports weeks.
- Pupils demonstrate that they know how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations, including how to use the internet safely. Older pupils are well aware of the effects of the misuse of drugs and the dangers of smoking and alcohol.

- Aspects of relationships education are well developed across all year groups with an emphasis on friendship and mutual support, with clear strategies to deal with a variety of situations. However, there is limited evidence that pupils have the opportunity to understand and respect different types of relationships. Pupils know little about body changes and are largely unprepared for puberty.
- Pupils' financial awareness and capability is limited and less well developed in preparing them to understand the world of work and money management. Pupils work well in pairs and groups, cooperate to develop ideas and solutions and can articulate their thoughts confidently. They are positive about their personal development and enjoy opportunities to take responsibility, such as through the work of the Eco Team.

Quality of teaching in PSHE

The quality of teaching in PSHE is satisfactory.

- Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and confidence in aspects of the subject such as food and nutrition, the benefits of exercise and sport, and how to conduct positive relationships. However, clear ground rules are not always applied when teaching more sensitive issues.
- Teaching assistants are deployed well to support learning, especially in practical activities, where younger pupils can confidently explain tasks and complete them well.
- The best lessons are characterised by interesting and challenging activities. However, some lessons lack pace and the work is too easy, especially for the more able pupils. In these lessons, pupils have too few opportunities to learn independently, and questioning techniques do not deepen their thinking.
- Assessment of pupils' understanding is at an early stage of development. Currently there is little formal teacher assessment or recording of pupils' knowledge and understanding of discrete aspects of PSHE.

Quality of the curriculum in PSHE

The quality of the curriculum in PSHE is inadequate.

- Statutory requirements for sex and relationships education are not met. There is insufficient awareness of the physical aspects of sex and relationships education, in an age-appropriate form, specifically, body changes and preparation for puberty. The curriculum does not ensure continuity and comprehensive entitlement across the key stages.
- External contributions are much appreciated by pupils. For example, Year 6 spoke very highly of their day with the 'Crucial Crew' although there was limited follow-up on return to school as part of a well-developed scheme of work. The well organised health and sports weeks and additional sports activities provide valuable additions to the PSHE curriculum.

- Some areas of the programme, such as health and relationships, are taught in considerable depth and to all year groups. Others, including financial capability, are not sufficiently covered.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in PSHE

The effectiveness of leadership and management in PSHE is inadequate.

- The statutory requirements for sex and relationships education are not met.
- Self-evaluation is weak and the monitoring of teaching and learning in the subject, including the assessment of pupils' understanding and outcomes, does not inform improvement planning.
- There is no subject-specific professional development for the PSHE coordinator, nor a planned programme for teachers' professional development, some of whom lack confidence and expertise regarding the teaching of sensitive topics.
- The subject has a low profile in school generally.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring that all statutory requirements for sex and relationships education are met
- implementing rigorous systems to monitor and evaluate provision and teaching and learning in the subject
- improving subject-specific staff training for teachers, particularly regarding the teaching of sensitive issues.

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

Janet Palmer
Her Majesty's Inspector