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20 December 2011

Mrs D May
Headteacher
Lady Zia Wernher School
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Dear Mrs May

Ofsted 2011–12 subject survey inspection programme: physical education (PE)

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and pupils, during my visit on 1 December 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; scrutiny of relevant documentation; observation of five lessons and therapy sessions and a review of physical activity at lunchtime and in around school. I discussed PE with one pupil, several expressed their interest in particular activities by signing and I spent a considerable amount of time focusing on pupils' enjoyment during activities.

The overall effectiveness of PE is outstanding.

Achievement in PE

Achievement in PE is outstanding.

- No opportunity is missed to develop pupils' physical awareness and dexterity. Very well-considered strategies for continually engaging pupils in physical movement specific to their needs and abilities means that they are constantly expected to be as physically active as possible. Even the most simple of opportunities, such as the positioning of pupils' activities on their standing frames are carefully planned to ensure that pupils stretch their arms and use their strength effectively.

- All staff encourage pupils to be as physically independent as possible. Much thought is given to posture and position so that non-ambulant pupils are in the appropriate position to be comfortable and active. Pupils who are more physically able actively enjoy games and physical activity. Pupils who are more cognitively able are given opportunities to think tactically and play adapted games and sports.
- The school's detailed monitoring records and evidence from lesson observations show that pupils make outstanding progress in their physical development. The school is notably successful in enabling pupils who have degenerative physical conditions to make the very best of their physical abilities so they remain as independent and mobile as possible.

Quality of teaching in PE

The quality of teaching in PE is outstanding.

- Teachers, therapists and support staff know individual pupils very well and support them very effectively in their physical development. The range of needs within the school is wide and staff work well together to ensure that each pupil has his or her needs met personally and with a tangible sense of dignity and respect.
- Specialist teachers and therapists work alongside teachers and support staff to provide highly adapted programmes for individuals and small groups. For example, in two rebound sessions, the instructor, working alongside support staff, delivered two different sessions to two pupils with very different needs. In both cases, the pupils enjoyed their learning a great deal and benefited from bespoke activities and exercises.

Quality of the curriculum in PE

The quality of the curriculum in PE is outstanding.

- The National Curriculum has been carefully analysed so that skills and experiences have been adapted to meet the needs of all pupils. Pupils experience all six areas of the National Curriculum including outdoor and adventurous activities. All pupils, whose medical condition allows, have access to six weeks of rebound therapy each year. The school is aware that some pupils would benefit from more regular access to this outstanding provision.
- All pupils have access to weekly swimming sessions. The PE curriculum and therapy sessions provide pupils with more than two hours of PE and physical development each week. The popular after-school club is well attended and provides further opportunities for pupils to be involved in games and activities further. At playtimes, pupils engage in a range of fun and energising activities, carefully matched to their needs. Pupils from the neighbouring local primary school regularly visit the school at lunchtime and play alongside pupils who are cognitively more able. A good range of trips and visits promotes physical activity outside school.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in PE

The effectiveness of leadership and management in PE is outstanding.

- The subject leader brings an expertise to the role that enables her to balance the medical needs of pupils with their entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum. Monitoring of teaching and learning is comprehensive and successful in ensuring a consistent approach to physical development throughout the whole curriculum. The subject leader has ably coached members of staff, including support staff. This has improved their understanding of how the PE curriculum can be adapted to meet the needs of individual pupils while maintaining sufficient challenge.
- The facilities for PE are good. The school has a high-quality swimming pool and hydrotherapy area. This is used frequently for therapy work, swimming lessons and other activities where water enables non-ambulant pupils to engage in the broader PE curriculum, such as dance. The school hall and outdoor areas are used well with every space being developed innovatively to allow pupils to explore safely.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- extending the provision for rebound therapy so this outstanding provision can be regularly experienced by those pupils who would benefit most from it.

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

Michael Sheridan
Her Majesty's Inspector