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Dr A Atkins
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Dear Dr Atkins

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 1 and 2 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 students; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of students' work; and observation of six lessons.

The overall effectiveness of PE is outstanding.

Achievement in PE

Achievement in PE is good.

- Students make good progress in Key Stage 3. The percentage meeting or exceeding national expectations by the end of Year 9 is above the national average. In swimming, the vast majority of students swim proficiently using a range of strokes. A significant proportion show good technique and share their knowledge when coaching others. In some games activities and trampolining, progress is only satisfactory because students do not grasp all of the basic skills they need to enable them to perform effectively in different activities.
- Standards in Key Stage 4 are high. Results in GCSE PE are consistently well above the national average; over the past two years one third of students have attained A* or A grades. Results in BTEC sport are also well

above the national average due to some excellent teaching which captures students' interest and enthusiasm, and enables them to make rapid progress.

- Achievement in the sixth form is satisfactory. Despite some outstanding teaching, a few students find the A-level PE course too challenging. Most make satisfactory progress and achieve results that are similar to the national average, but only a few choose to continue their studies in Year 13. Small but increasing numbers pursue the BTEC National diploma and achieve well.

Quality of teaching in PE

The quality of teaching in PE is good.

- Teaching is not outstanding due to some inconsistencies. These stem from teachers' interpretation of schemes of work which are highly detailed but lack clarity, so at times learning is not made explicit and progress is only satisfactory. Teaching is outstanding when teachers use their extensive knowledge of PE and information and communication technology to make learning interesting and enjoyable. They expect all students to complete work promptly and provide excellent individual support for them.
- Most lessons include regular opportunities for students to work in small groups to practice and refine their performance. Relationships are strong and students respond well to staff by working diligently for sustained periods of time. Occasionally, lesson time is not maximised and some learning objectives lack clarity. Teachers show a very good understanding of the requirements of GCSE PE and BTEC sport awards and make detailed assessments of students' progress so that they know when to intervene to alter provision or provide additional support for those at risk of underachieving.

Quality of the curriculum in PE

The quality of the curriculum in PE is outstanding.

- In all key stages, students receive at least two hours of PE each week including in the sixth form which is exceptional. The school's excellent facilities are used well to deliver a broad and balanced programme including swimming. This is complemented well by an extensive range of competitive school sport in which large numbers of students participate and enjoy.
- The school's specialism in sport enhances the curriculum and makes a significant contribution to overall school improvement. All students pursue BTEC sport or GCSE PE as part of their core entitlement to provide them with an additional qualification. The impact of this initiative including the results achieved will be evaluated fully next year. A good range of accredited awards in the sixth form enables students to continue their studies in PE and sport.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in PE

The effectiveness of leadership and management in PE is outstanding.

- Achievement in PE is good due to the outstanding leadership and management which underpin the capacity for sustained improvement. The subject leader's excellent subject knowledge and ambition combine to create a strong sense of purpose throughout the department. Improvements are driven by rigorous monitoring and detailed planning to tackle weaknesses and raise standards. Regular subject review and detailed analysis of results provides an accurate evaluation of PE.
- Leadership is well informed by current developments in the subject. The school plays a pivotal role in promoting PE and sport in other local schools. PE and sport enjoy a high profile in the school. Staff and facilities are well respected by students. Every opportunity to increase participation, extend opportunity and celebrate success is taken.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- generating greater consistency to the quality of teaching so that it is regularly outstanding by:
 - reviewing schemes of work so that they exemplify what exactly is to be taught in the time available at each stage of learning
 - ensuring that learning objectives describe what teachers expect students to learn by the end of the lesson and maximising the time available to promote students' achievement
 - modelling best practice.

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

John Mitcheson
Her Majesty's Inspector