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Mr P Beighton
Principal
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Dear Mr Beighton

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

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and students, during my visit on 7 and 8 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 and students; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of students' work; and observation of parts of 10 lessons.

The overall effectiveness of PE is outstanding.

Achievement in PE

Achievement in PE is outstanding.

- Students enter Year 7 with broadly average skills and make very good progress to attain above average standards by the end of Key Stage 3. This is because of the high-quality teaching, support and close monitoring they receive. Teachers inspire students to develop a passion and commitment to the subject. Students become confident in analysing and improving their skills and performance as a result of teachers constantly challenging them to improve their work independently. Collaboration between students when working in groups is exceptional.
- A strong health promotion programme, with good links to other departments, helps students to gain a very good understanding of how to lead an active, healthy lifestyle. They demonstrate good all-round fitness and the resilience to persevere in a broad range of activities. The in-depth

knowledge and high standard of practical skills they achieve in Key Stage 3 prepare students very well for Key Stages 4 and 5. Attainment in both GCSE and BTEC sport is consistently above national averages, especially the proportion of students achieving A* and A grades, and Distinctions.

Quality of teaching in PE

The quality of teaching in PE is outstanding.

- Teaching is consistently good or better. Standards are high because teachers have very high expectations of students who are motivated to achieve their best at all times. In a GCSE fitness training lesson, students demonstrated exceptional knowledge and understanding when independently refining their individual training schedules.
- Good subject knowledge is applied very well to provide concise, accurate and well-timed feedback which ensures that students know how to improve their work. Teachers use live and video demonstrations effectively to model high-quality performance and to illustrate the difference between attainment levels. Assessment of students in Key Stage 3 is systematic, consistent and covers the full breadth of students' knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Teachers' thorough knowledge and understanding of GCSE and BTEC course requirements ensure that students are very well prepared for practical assessments and examinations. GCSE and A-level students show exceptional diligence and commitment by downloading lesson notes and preparing for lessons. At times, some students become passive learners when they have too few opportunities to interact because discussions are dominated by the teacher.

Quality of the curriculum in PE

The quality of the curriculum in PE is good.

- The curriculum is well matched to sport in the community and has sufficient breadth and balance to engage all students. The range of water-based activities, such as aqua-aerobics, personal survival, life-saving and water polo, significantly enhances provision. Progression into Key Stage 4 is good because the curriculum is personalised through an options programme. Students develop leadership in all lessons and extend these skills through a range of qualifications, offered in every key stage. Schemes of work reflect recent subject developments and provide a good platform for learning.
- The vast majority of students access two hours of PE each week in Key Stage 3. In Key Stage 4, only one third, those students studying PE and dance examination courses, meet this expectation. An extensive programme of inter-house sporting competition has increased the overall participation of the vast majority to above the minimum two-hour expectation.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in PE

The effectiveness of leadership and management in PE is outstanding.

- Monitoring of the subject at all levels is comprehensive and leads to an accurate evaluation of the department's practice. The subject leader sets a clear vision for further improvement and inspires wholehearted commitment from staff and students. He makes full use of the academy's good facilities and the expertise provided by his strong team. All have very high expectations and strive to drive up standards even further. Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined. The department's robust tracking of progress and caring support enable students to reach their full potential.
- Highly effective links to external partners and local clubs enable students to attain even higher standards. The rapid growth in popularity and the high standard of girls' football provide a good example. The academy's commitment to maintaining the improvements made to PE by the school sport partnership has ensured that the strong primary school links have been sustained.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- increasing the time allocated to core PE in Key Stage 4
- broadening the range of tasks in theory lessons so that students become more actively engaged in their learning.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop PE in the academy.

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.

Yours sincerely

Geoff Sheldon
Additional Inspector