

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



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Mrs K Haywood
Acting Principal
Trevithick Learning Academy
Mount Pleasant Road
Camborne
Cornwall
TR14 7RH

Dear Mrs Haywood

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

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and pupils, during my visit on 11 January 2012 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; and observation of four lessons, a school council meeting and an assembly.

The overall effectiveness of PSHE is outstanding.

Achievement in PSHE

Achievement in PSHE is outstanding.

- Pupils have a detailed understanding of how to lead healthy, active lifestyles. They know what helps them to grow and thrive. They take part in a wide variety of after-school clubs including surfing, dance, gymnastics and a range of competitive sports.
- Their personal and social skills are exemplary. Some arrive at the school with considerable issues in these areas, but quickly develop the ability to socialise, fit in, and make a valuable contribution to school life due to the quality of support they receive.
- Pupils' knowledge of sex, relationships and drugs education is appropriate for their age. Their knowledge and understanding of the dangers and effects of smoking are particularly well developed.

- They know how to stay safe in a variety of situations and understand the negative impact of different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying.

Quality of teaching in PSHE

The quality of teaching in PSHE is good.

- Teachers use a wide range of resources, such as puppets, to deliver interesting and engaging lessons. Pupils are encouraged to talk at length and extend their emotional vocabulary. A good focus is placed on pupils sharing their views and working collaboratively.
- Teaching assistants are well prepared and deployed by class teachers in lessons to support and extend pupils' learning.
- A good range of questioning strategies is used by adults to involve pupils in lessons and challenge their thinking.
- Learning objectives in teachers' planning are not consistently clear or measurable in every class.
- Good baseline assessment is used by all teachers to identify those pupils who may require additional support.

Quality of the curriculum in PSHE

The quality of the curriculum in PSHE is outstanding.

- The curriculum is rich and permeates all levels of the whole-school curriculum. Pupils have frequent opportunities to develop their PSHE skills through a wide range of residential visits; opportunities to debate and discuss; and to take on roles and responsibilities within the school.
- The taught PSHE curriculum is well mapped throughout the school and based on aspects of different commercial schemes of work.
- Additional themed events, such as enterprise, anti-bullying and world of work days, deepen pupils' understanding. These events use the expertise of a wide range of external speakers.
- The extensive range of progressively challenging residential visits, exchanges with schools in contrasting locations, and cultural visits, develops a rich source of experience and discussion.
- The curriculum is constantly under review and new initiatives are frequently introduced.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in PSHE

The effectiveness of leadership and management in PSHE is good.

- The leadership of PSHE is determined and conscientious. A good focus on evaluating baseline knowledge and understanding provides all teachers with an effective tool to gauge pupils' progress.
- The subject leader supports individual staff well to develop resources and plan lessons.

- Good brokering of external visitors by the subject leader supports the outstanding curriculum.
- The subject action plan identifies future actions, although it has no measurement of their intended success.
- The named governor for PSHE visits lessons, supports the subject leader and has a wide involvement in the life of the school.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring that all lessons consistently have clear and measurable learning objectives so that learning is more progressive within every lesson
- ensuring that the subject action plan has more measurable success criteria for its stated actions.

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.

Yours sincerely

Clive Kempton
Her Majesty's Inspector