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Reverend A Perry
Headteacher
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Dear Reverend Perry

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

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and students, during my visit on 10 and 11 January 2012 to look at work in PSHE education.

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 eight lessons or parts of lessons, an assembly and a tutorial.

The overall effectiveness of PSHE education is satisfactory.

Achievement in PSHE education

Achievement in PSHE education is satisfactory.

- Students have a broadly good awareness of factors associated with health and well-being. As a result of supportive work in science, physical education, food technology and religious education, they: understand the importance of nutrition and exercise for maintaining physical and mental health; have a good understanding of aspects of sex and relationships education including managing personal risk; and are aware of the effects and dangers associated with substance misuse.
- Students are making satisfactory progress overall in developing their understanding and skills in relation to enterprise, money management and the world of work. Achievement in the sixth form is good; students value

the opportunities they have to attend careers events, mock interviews and sessions on personal finance. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities develop good financial capability and understand well how to achieve the next steps in their future career path. However, students in Year 11 have made limited progress in their financial capability. The school has taken steps to remedy this by making changes to future Key Stage 4 programmes.

- Students understand well the effects of bullying on emotional well-being including the negative impact of racist, disablist and homophobic language.

Quality of teaching in PSHE education

The quality of teaching in PSHE education is satisfactory.

- Most lessons have appropriate objectives but tasks are not always planned to meet the needs of the range of students, particularly the most able for whom expectations are too low. Resources are appropriate but much of the learning is passive with insufficient time for students to explore issues independently or ask questions.
- Discussion is a feature in lessons and students enjoy the opportunities they have to actively participate. However, teachers often take responses only from those who volunteer answers, leading to lack of engagement by some.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is insufficiently strong to enable them to extend and challenge students' thinking and many are limited in their use of effective questioning.
- Teachers do not formally identify attainment and progress in PSHE education and rarely provide feedback to students on how to improve their work. Expectations of the quality of students' work are not commensurate with what teachers expect in other subjects. However, where PSHE topics are covered in other subjects, expectations are high and the marking of students' work is good.

Quality of the curriculum in PSHE education

The quality of the curriculum in PSHE education is satisfactory.

- The programme is broadly matched to students' needs and meets particularly well the needs of those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those whose circumstances make them vulnerable. For example, extra lessons are provided on sex and relationships education to ensure their needs are well met. However, the current curriculum resource of one period of dedicated PSHE education each month is insufficient to ensure depth of coverage for some topic areas.
- The school and wider community provide a range of opportunities for students to apply and extend their personal and social skills and the school makes every effort to ensure that these opportunities are accessible to all, regardless of their circumstances; this includes international links and

overseas trips. Some sixth form students in particular are using their new roles as college captains to develop their leadership, communication and mentoring skills.

- External visitors provide valued opportunities for students to experience enterprise activities and sixth form students have benefited from meeting representatives from different industries during careers week.
- Plans are in place to engage teachers and students more fully in reviewing the PSHE curriculum. Currently, the student voice and analysis of local social data have a limited influence on developing the curriculum content.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in PSHE education

The effectiveness of leadership and management in PSHE education is satisfactory.

- Leaders and managers have ensured that statutory requirements are met and strategies are in place to promote inclusion and tackle discrimination including prejudiced-based bullying. Good links exist with partner agencies to support the personal and social development of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those whose circumstances make them vulnerable.
- However, provision for PSHE education, including teaching and learning, is not regularly monitored or reviewed. To date, self-evaluation has not been informed by subject review or understanding of good practice in PSHE education. The school has plans for a subject review of PSHE education in the near future. Opportunities for professional development are limited and, as a result, some teachers lack the subject knowledge and expertise to deliver it effectively.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- improving the monitoring and evaluation of provision in PSHE to ensure that students' needs are met, particularly the most able
- ensuring that individual progress is monitored in Years 7 to 11
- improving subject specific training for teachers.

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

Janet Palmer
Her Majesty's Inspector