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27 January 2012

Mrs D Ross
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Ross

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

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 12 January 2012 to look at work in PE. Please also pass on my thanks to the director of Stevenage Sporting Futures who also met with me.

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 three lessons, an extra-curricular club and organised activity on the playground.

The overall effectiveness of PE is good.

Achievement in PE

Achievement in PE is good.

- Attainment is above average by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils are highly positive about being active, and maintaining their health and fitness. Outcomes are particularly strong in games where pupils develop skills at a rapid pace. Swimming is taught early in Key Stage 2. By the end of Year 6, most pupils are able to swim 25 metres. Extra lessons are organised for those who do not reach this expectation.
- A significant number of pupils identified as being gifted and talented in PE and sport are ably supported through links between the school and local and national sports clubs and associations. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well in PE, so they are fully

involved in lessons and make expected progress. The school is able to demonstrate how they sensitively and discretely adapt lessons so they are accessible by all pupils.

- While achievement is good overall, the opportunity for pupils to increase their knowledge, skills and understanding by evaluating and improving their own and others' performance is underdeveloped.

Quality of teaching in PE

The quality of teaching in PE is good.

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and use this well to develop pupils' skills and competencies, particularly in games activities. Pupils enjoy a range of activities and challenges in lessons. The best lessons are characterised by rapid pace and a focus on pupils remaining active for extended periods of time to promote their health and fitness.
- Teaching is less effective when opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own performance are limited or when the pace of learning slows and pupils spend too little time actively engaged. The use of information communication technology (ICT) to provide pupils with prompt feedback on their performance is underdeveloped.

Quality of the curriculum in PE

The quality of the curriculum in PE is good.

- The school uses a commercial scheme to ensure progression in learning in all areas of the National Curriculum. Teachers adapt this well to ensure that the activities meet the full range of pupils' needs, including for those pupils that have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Local facilities are used well to support the curriculum. For example, the local park is used to teach a range of outdoor adventurous activities, including climbing, canoeing and sailing, which pupils thoroughly enjoy. Good links with local secondary schools fostered through the School Sports Partnership in the past are being maintained so that pupils benefit from participation in PE and sport in their specialist facilities.
- The range and quality of extra-curricular activities are good. Pupils are exceptionally positive about the opportunities they have to take part in sport after school and in particular, to compete against other schools. The school has a strong record of participation in local competitions and has traditionally performed well in these.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in PE

The effectiveness of leadership and management in PE is good.

- The subject leader is maintaining the profile of PE and school sport by supporting the development of a successor organisation to the school sports partnership. This is managed by the same people who managed the partnership and provides a similar service to schools who 'buy in' to their

package. This enables the school to engage in a range of sporting opportunities, increase pupils' participation in physical activity, engage in staff training and develop sports coaches through an apprentice scheme.

- The subject leader has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of PE which are often reviewed and shared in staff meetings and with external advisers. Teachers are provided with training and support to help them improve but the subject leader has limited time to monitor the quality of teaching in PE throughout the school and effectively share the best practice.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- promoting opportunities for pupils to evaluate and improve their performance that maintains the brisk pace of learning and includes the use of technology
- providing opportunities for the subject leader to monitor the quality of teaching throughout the school so that best practice can be shared more readily.

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

Michael Sheridan
Her Majesty's Inspector