

Aviation House  
125 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231  
F 020 7421 6855  
[enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



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Mr M Forster  
Headteacher  
Middlewich High School  
King Edward St  
Middlewich  
Cheshire  
CW10 9BU

Dear Mr Forster

### **Ofsted 2011–12 subject survey inspection programme: citizenship**

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and students, during my visit on 24 and 25 January 2012 to look at work in citizenship.

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; observation of six lessons; and a learning walk through Year 9 diversity day.

The overall effectiveness of citizenship is inadequate.

#### **Achievement in citizenship**

Achievement in citizenship is inadequate.

- Curriculum provision fails to provide adequate coverage in the subject. While the school assesses progress in the subject in Year 9, these levels are based upon self-assessment which is largely inaccurate.
- The most able students are often unable to access higher levels of achievement because lessons do not always challenge them appropriately.
- Achievement through active citizenship in its broader sense is stronger. Students are very proud of and loyal to their school. Over 50 students make up the school council, which has achieved success in influencing the school uniform and improving the school environment. Eco Champions take responsibility for two gardens initiated by the council. Last year, 20 students visited Ethiopia to help put concrete floors into a village school;

they reported favourably on this experience and its influence on their perspectives.

### **Quality of teaching in citizenship**

The quality of teaching in citizenship is satisfactory.

- While the overall effectiveness of citizenship is inadequate, the majority of teaching observed was satisfactory, with some that was good. Where stronger teaching was seen, for example, in a Year 8 English lesson, students were asked to consider: 'Is it ever justified to take a life?' Through well-planned, fast-paced activities, students engaged in an animated discussion which prompted thought-provoking and sometimes controversial issues about human rights. The teacher's skilful questioning promoted students' skills of enquiry and allowed the most able students to challenge their own opinions and give robust reasons for their views.
- Where teaching is less effective, lessons lack pace and challenge. Students make inadequate progress because teaching is almost entirely led by the teacher and few opportunities arise, particularly for the most able, to challenge their own and other people's views. Occasionally, when group work is planned, the level of challenge is insufficient, for example, a group of very able students working on one relatively easy task.

### **Quality of the curriculum in citizenship**

The quality of the curriculum in citizenship is inadequate.

- Citizenship is primarily delivered through Lifeskills, taught by form tutors on a rolling programme of one hour sessions every week or so. However, as Lifeskills also incorporates many important personal, social and health education topics, insufficient time is provided to cover key subject knowledge in citizenship or support suitable progression in learning.
- While some mapping of citizenship across Lifeskills lessons and some effective cross-curricular delivery across other subjects are in place, cross-curricular provision is not yet mapped to ensure that relevant aspects are covered in sufficient depth or detail. Some key citizenship topics are covered in insufficient depth in both key stages – such as the work of the civil and criminal justice system, the European Union, United Nations, and the key concept of democracy.

### **Effectiveness of leadership and management in citizenship**

The effectiveness of leadership and management in citizenship is inadequate.

- Citizenship education has not taken sufficient priority in recent years and as a result, weaknesses in the subject have not been addressed. Senior and middle leaders responsible for the subject are also lead professionals for pastoral care within the school. As a consequence, they have not had sufficient time to strengthen citizenship education adequately.

- While efforts have been made to implement the citizenship curriculum, opportunities have been missed to fully use and develop the skills and knowledge of staff in relevant curriculum areas such as humanities and English.
- Current leaders do not have sufficient subject knowledge to effectively monitor and assess achievement.

**Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:**

- improving achievement by accurately assessing key topics and promoting progression, particularly for the most able students
- identifying key subjects within the curriculum that can contribute to delivery of aspects of the range and content of citizenship
- nominating a curriculum leader with appropriate subject knowledge to effectively monitor and evaluate the quality of provision
- sharing good practice in teaching so that it is engaging and stimulating and suitably encourages independent learning.

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

**Sally Kenyon**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**