

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

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



5 March 2012

Mr D Simons
Headteacher
Cornwallis Academy
Hubbards Lane
Linton
Maidstone
ME17 4HX

Dear Mr Simons

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 22 and 23 February 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 observations of lessons, mentoring schemes and workshops.

The overall effectiveness of PSHE education is good.

Achievement in PSHE education

Achievement in PSHE education is good.

- Students demonstrate a very high level of commitment to their personal well-being and to that of their peers. They generally have a mature understanding of the value of maintaining relationships and resolving conflict. They are well informed about external advice and support agencies and have the confidence to draw on such services if needed.
- Understanding among students about their economic well-being and personal finances is good. In relation to their age and key stage, students have an appropriate grasp of their continuing education and career aspirations and the actions needed to further their development.

- Underpinned by an active 'healthy schools' programme, students are knowledgeable about health matters and keen to participate in sports activities. Examples were seen of critical and well-informed written work on body image, eating disorders and peer pressure. Students' understanding of sex and relationships education is good.
- In lessons, a minority of students struggle to work independently or in groups. They fail to relate the topics being studied to their own personal experience, thereby missing opportunities for learning.

Quality of teaching in PSHE education

The quality of teaching in PSHE education is good.

- Teachers demonstrate high levels of commitment to students' well-being. In the best instances, teachers are able to accommodate issues effectively within their respective subjects; for example in GCSE physical education, food technology and careers education. Questioning is good and reflective of the levels of students' understanding.
- In the weaker examples, teachers are unclear of what levels to expect of students and, to a degree, revisited topics with which students were already familiar. Some lacked enough specialist knowledge and therefore confidence.
- Staff are skilled in supporting students to devise strategies to support their academic and personal development through a mentoring programme.
- Detailed systems are in place to monitor students' academic progress and their engagement with the broader aspects of their education. Monitoring incorporates self-management, behaviour, commitment and responsibility for self and towards others. While not a bespoke PSHE education recording tool, monitoring plays a key role in recording students' performance in relation to well-being.

Quality of the curriculum in PSHE education

The quality of the curriculum in PSHE education is good.

- The curriculum encompasses the 'well-being' themes of: all about me, staying safe, mental health, our world and relationships. The lesson guidance material underpinning each of these themes is good.
- Particularly well-developed elements of the broad offer include a sixth form PSHE curriculum which extends previous learning; a responsive 'Skills for Life' programme which embraces enterprise and careers education; and a well-ordered spiritual, moral, social and cultural programme.
- A variety of PSHE education-related programmes has developed over time but, overall, is not entirely coherent.
- Students report favourably on the various curriculum days throughout the year. These provide them with a bespoke programme covering issues such as sexual health, banking, university finance and employment law.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in PSHE education

The effectiveness of leadership and management in PSHE education is good with outstanding features.

- PSHE and well-being permeate all aspects of school life and effectively contribute to improvement, achievement and the quality of students' experience. The programme is responsive to local need.
- Monitoring, evaluation and tracking are well embedded. Staff are self-critical and receptive to continued improvement. Against the backdrop of a still evolving well-being model, monitoring has, however, not sufficiently identified specific weaknesses in delivery and teaching.
- Technology is used well to enhance teaching and monitor students' progress and behaviour. Very useful intelligence is emerging on, for example, incidents of substance misuse, smoking or eating disorders. The information is used to support individual interventions.
- Strategic responsibility for the expansive well-being programme sits with one of two deputy headteachers. This helps to ensure that a high priority for this aspect of school life. In respect, however, of the PSHE education elements, teachers are not sufficiently informed about what constitutes best practice.
- The drive to ensure that all students access the well-being curriculum is impressive. For example, the inclusion team (family support workers, a full-time counsellor, psychologists and others) manages referrals to statutory agencies well.
- The capacity for further improvement is very good.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- reviewing the PSHE education curriculum and supporting programmes
- providing more subject-specific specialist oversight.

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

Tony Gallagher
Her Majesty's Inspector