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8 March 2012

Mrs L Jones  
Principal  
Colston's Girls' School  
Cheltenham Road  
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BS6 5RD

Dear Mrs Jones

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

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and students, during my visit on 21 and 22 February 2012 to look at work in PE.

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; and observation of five lessons and extra-curricular activities.

The overall effectiveness of PE is outstanding.

**Achievement in PE**

Achievement in PE is outstanding.

- All students make rapid progress from their starting points. They attain standards that are well above average, particularly in Key Stage 3 and the highest grades in GCSE PE, as a result of consistently high-quality teaching. They develop a wide range of high level skills as performers, leaders, officials and coaches. All students are very adept at observing, evaluating and giving feedback to each other to improve their own and others' work. They have excellent understanding of healthy living and appreciate that teachers 'do not patronise us' about how to lead a healthy lifestyle. They are highly proficient in the use of subject vocabulary and terminology. Girls identified with special educational needs, a disability or are eligible for a free school meal make the same progress as others in the school. Those identified as gifted and talented attain exceptionally well

because of high levels of challenge in lessons. Students demonstrate high levels of independence and perseverance to improve during lessons. They want to succeed and do so. Students reports that the teachers boost morale, and encourage them to be active and achieve excellence.

- The student voice is strong with excellent opportunities for feedback that have brought about effective changes to curriculum and extra-curricular provision. The 'get set' team, sports reports and sports council have a high profile across the school and reflect the girls' positive experiences and achievement in the subject. Students thoroughly enjoy the subject demonstrating very positive attitudes that are reflected in high levels of participation in lessons and extra-curricular activities.

### **Quality of teaching in PE**

The quality of teaching in PE is outstanding.

- All teachers have outstanding subject knowledge that is used extremely well to extend students' knowledge and understanding of the subject, and to observe and intervene with feedback that ensures that they all improve in their work and make rapid progress. Planning is comprehensive and makes outstanding use of students' prior learning. As a result, work is carefully matched to individual needs, ensuring that gifted students are challenged and work is adapted where necessary for less able students. Excellent support from a specialist teaching assistant ensures that targeted students are engaged and making the same progress as others in the class. Relationships between staff and students are outstanding.
- An extensive range of teaching methods, resources and information and communications technology is used to match students' different learning styles, to inspire learning and promote independence. Non-performers are fully included in lessons through taking a variety of relevant roles that support their learning. Teachers use questioning effectively and in the outstanding lessons this involved extended questioning that developed girls' higher-order thinking and reasoning skills. Time is used effectively although occasionally there is too much teacher input and the pace of learning slows.
- Assessment procedures are secure in Key Stage 3 and for examination groups with criteria that are easily accessible by students. Target levels are successfully used in lessons to motivate students and to help them understand what they need to do to achieve more. Assessment in Key Stage 4 is less comprehensive and misses the opportunity to assess girls' skills against learning objectives or in the wider aspects of leadership and fitness. The subject leader undertakes comprehensive analysis of progress and intervenes with any students identified as underachieving against their aspirational targets.

### **Quality of the curriculum in PE**

The quality of the curriculum in PE is outstanding.

- The curriculum and extra-curricular provision provide rich experiences that contribute to students' high standards and engagement. Schemes of work support teaching well and ensure continuous learning across age groups. All students, including those in Year 12, have above the expected time allocated to PE although when travelling time is adversely affected by traffic, learning time is diminished.
- The enrichment programme makes good use of external experts. A good proportion of students take up the opportunities during lunchtimes and after school. Girls are particularly enthusiastic about the range of opportunities to be competitive through intra- and inter-school events and teams are successful. Excellent links are created with other subjects, particularly modern languages. The Olympic values theme has a very high profile across the school and students enjoy being nominated as the Olympian of the lesson. The European Languages day offered good opportunities to learn games and dances from other countries.

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management in PE is outstanding.

- The subject leader has a comprehensive understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the department, reflected in accurate self-evaluation and identification of areas for improvement. She is very well informed of current initiatives and is an outstanding role model. A cohesive department has been created with other members having delegated responsibilities. This results in a collective drive that is bringing about improvements at pace. There is a palpable ethos of aspiration among staff and students.
- Monitoring, evaluation and lesson observations are undertaken by senior leaders and the subject leader as part of performance management procedures. Good opportunities exist to share effective practice resulting in consistency in the quality of teaching. The subject leader promotes aspects of effective teaching and learning across the school.

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

- exploring ways to assess students' progress in core Key Stage 4 lessons against learning objectives and wider aspects of their achievements.

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.

Yours sincerely

**Judith Rundle**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**