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Mr G Van Cauwelaert  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Van Cauwelaert

**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 7 and 8 March 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 three groups of students; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of students' work; and joint observation of five lessons and collective worship.

The overall effectiveness of PSHE education is good.

**Achievement in PSHE education**

Achievement in PSHE education is good.

- Students' personal development is good with outstanding aspects. They have extremely positive attitudes towards PSHE education and form trusting relationships that enable them to express their feelings and opinions openly.
- Students have good knowledge and understanding of a balanced and healthy diet. They know the benefits of exercise for physical and mental health; understand the risks associated with drugs, alcohol and smoking; and have good opportunities to explore peer pressure and strategies to keep themselves safe.

- Social responsibility is developed particularly well through a wide range of leadership opportunities. Older students organise fundraising events, and enjoy roles such as 'reading partners', 'mathematic buddies', mentors, sports captains, school and youth parliament representatives.
- Students have a good understanding of bullying and the effects on mental health through assemblies and PSHE education lessons. Risks associated with computer social networking have a high profile.
- As a result of whole-school provision, students develop excellent employability skills. This is shown in the low number who do not enter education, employment or training.

### **Quality of teaching in PSHE education**

The quality of teaching in PSHE education is good.

- Teachers demonstrate expert subject knowledge and confidence in the delivery of sensitive PSHE education topics. They create a safe, open and inclusive classroom to enable students to explore and debate social, health, environmental and political issues.
- The best teaching is characterised by expertise in the use of group work, highly interactive approaches and students having fun. Teaching is particularly effective when teachers gather and use student feedback from pair and group work to provide personal guidance on developing speaking and listening skills.
- Schemes of work have improved to increase the range of interactive tasks and resources to engage and involve students, and to develop their critical thinking skills. Good use is made of information and communication technology to provide students with imaginative visual images and relevant video clips to enrich their experiences and extend cultural awareness. Although teachers provide good-quality support, tasks and resources are not always adjusted to meet the range of students' needs.
- Assessment is integral to lesson planning to enable students and teachers to evaluate students' progress. Students are increasingly involved in self- and peer-assessment, end of unit quizzes and questionnaires. However, there is no formal teacher assessment, recording or reporting of their knowledge and understanding of discrete aspects of PSHE education.

### **Quality of the curriculum in PSHE education**

The quality of the curriculum in PSHE education is good with outstanding features.

- The programme is woven through the religious education curriculum and complemented by discrete PSHE education lessons, cross-curricular input and powerful assemblies. The high-quality enrichment programme provides outstanding opportunities to develop and practise personal and social skills.

- Sex and relationships education is sensitively designed to ensure that students can make safe, informed choices underpinned by values and beliefs that promote respect, dignity and responsibility.
- Resources to challenge and inform students about prejudice-based bullying, discrimination and stereotypes are carefully structured to promote respect for difference.
- The Healthy Schools Award and sports specialism have a positive impact on participation rates in sport and dance. Partnership links with schools in Italy, France and Germany enable students to explore and compare approaches to healthy lifestyles.
- The introduction of the 'careers academy' in the sixth form provides specialist support from business partners and opportunities for students to gain first-hand experiences of the working environment.

### **Effectiveness of leadership and management in PSHE education**

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

- PSHE education has high status and is promoted effectively by the senior leadership team and subject specialists.
- New leadership for PSHE education has supported an effective review of provision. Self-evaluation has identified that assessment information is not sufficiently detailed to contribute to this process. A well-considered improvement plan sets the direction and vision for the subject.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning is incorporated into quality assurance processes led by the subject leader for religious education. This means that the subject leader for PSHE education does not have a detailed overview of PSHE teaching and learning in lessons.
- Leaders have been particularly successful in negotiating new arrangements to enhance the delivery of careers education, and to extend links with business partners.

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

- implementing a system of teacher assessment, recording and reporting for PSHE education to ensure that attainment and progress information contributes to self-evaluation
- developing a shared approach to monitoring teaching and learning between subject leaders in religious education and PSHE education to share best practice in both subjects.

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. A copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

**Nada Trikić**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**