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Mr S Shephard
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Shephard

Ofsted 2012–13 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 1 and 2 May 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 students' work and relevant documentation; and observation of seven lessons.

The overall effectiveness of PE is good.

Achievement in PE

Achievement in PE is good.

- Students make good progress from their starting points because of the quality of teaching. They acquire new skills quickly and most can apply these consistently in a broad range of different situations and activities. Attainment in GCSE PE has been significantly below average in recent years but work seen in lessons, students' files and the school's own monitoring records indicate that this is rising rapidly. All students achieve well in the sports and active leisure diploma and in GCSE dance where standards are equal to or better than national averages. Teachers have a less secure overview of students' achievements in core Key Stage 4 PE as their progress is not formally assessed and monitored.
- Students make outstanding progress in developing leadership skills and when evaluating and improving their own and others' work. Older students

say this is helping with their organisation, their confidence to ask questions and willingness to engage more in other subjects. Students make good progress in performing a range of skills but teachers' expectations to improve students' performances are inconsistent.

- Students' positive attitudes towards the subject are reflected in their high participation rates in lessons and extra-curricular activities. High levels of enjoyment and engagement were seen in all lessons. Behaviour is good and most students persevere to improve their work and fitness levels. Students respond positively to the increased expectations to sustain physical activity in lessons. They have increasing opportunities to give feedback on provision and positive changes have been made as result to changing facilities, the curriculum and extra-curricular provision.

Quality of teaching in PE

The quality of teaching in PE is good.

- Teachers' secure subject knowledge is used well to teach skills and to extend students' responses to tasks. Teachers divide work into manageable sections so that students progress through the correct steps of learning that is matched to their different abilities. All staff are skilled at using open-ended questions to engage and motivate students to want to learn, to sensitively redirect incorrect answers and to extend students' independent thinking. In the best lessons, digital cameras are used effectively to enable students to observe, evaluate and identify their own strengths, targets and the next steps in learning.
- Teachers generally have high expectations of students although at times the higher attaining are not challenged enough and are capable of achieving even more. Most teachers are good at observing and intervening with timely and specific feedback on how to improve. Good support is provided by teaching assistants so that students at the early stages of learning English or those who have special educational needs are fully included in lessons and make the same good progress as others in the class.
- Teachers make good use of National Curriculum levels of attainment at the start of lessons to ensure that all students understand the learning intentions. However, not all teachers then revisit these throughout the lessons to help students understand their progress and how to improve further. Marking, feedback and monitoring of progress for examination groups are robust.

Quality of the curriculum in PE

The quality of the curriculum in PE is good.

- All students access two hours of PE in the curriculum with additional time for GCSE PE, GCSE dance and the sports and active leisure diploma. A good proportion take up the opportunities for extra-curricular activities.

- The curriculum has been extended to provide a greater range of experiences but remains dominated by games, especially in Key Stage 3 and core lessons in Key Stage 4. The introduction of Zumba and dance into Key Stage 3 is leading to higher levels of participation and engagement in lessons. Programmes have been adapted well for a small number of reluctant students to better match their needs and interests. Schemes of work are being revised well to ensure coverage of National Curriculum expectations. Students have excellent opportunities to develop leadership skills and apply them by leading activities in lessons, with younger students and primary-aged pupils.
- The extensive extra-curricular programme is supported well by a high number of staff who lead clubs, teams and act as positive role models. Consequently, students have a broad range of opportunities to be physically active before and after school as well as at lunchtimes. Students use their literacy, numeracy and communication skills well in PE although the department misses the opportunity to exploit further their journalistic skills through displays linked to teams and honours boards.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in PE

The effectiveness of leadership and management in PE is good.

- You and senior leaders provide good support to the PE department. As a result, provision and achievement have improved rapidly in recent years and PE has a high profile around the school. As one student said: 'PE has improved off the scale'. The subject leader has secure knowledge and understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the department because of robust approaches to monitoring and evaluating its work. He has set a clear and ambitious drive for further improvement. Good opportunities exist to share good practice although inconsistencies remain in how well this is embedded with all staff. Recent actions have led to improvements in provision although this is yet to impact fully on raising standards for all students.
- Good links have been created with the local college and local sports clubs to enhance opportunities further, especially via a 'community PE coordinator'. Students are enthusiastic about the recent upgrading of equipment and comment that this has increased their enjoyment, engagement and achievement in PE. They recognise that the department makes the best of its limited indoor and outdoor facilities to provide positive experiences for them.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- sharing good practice further to ensure consistently good teaching, by:
 - observing and providing subsequent feedback to students on how to improve their learning
 - ensuring all teachers use National Curriculum assessment criteria consistently in lessons

- increasing the use of modern technologies to observe, evaluate and identify students' targets and next steps in learning
- increasing the level of challenge for higher attaining students
- exploring and introducing a greater breadth of experiences into the core curriculum in Key Stages 3 and 4 and assessing students' progress in core lessons in Key Stage 4.

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

Judith Rundle
Her Majesty's Inspector