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Mrs M Rafee
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Rafee

Ofsted 2012–13 subject survey inspection programme: citizenship

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and students, during my visit on 2 and 3 May 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; and observation of six lessons and an assembly.

The overall effectiveness of citizenship is good.

Achievement in citizenship

Achievement in citizenship is good.

- Attainment was below average in 2011 but observation and data suggest a strong upward trend in 2012.
- Students made good progress in the lessons observed in researching and analysing citizenship issues and reporting back to the class.
- Students worked together well and showed enjoyment in learning about citizenship; students interviewed were also very positive about citizenship lessons, with one Key Stage 4 student describing them as 'a treat'.
- In Key Stage 3, students' books do not provide a good record of sustained progress over time and are sometimes incomplete and poorly presented.
- Students in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form made good progress in preparing for imminent examinations and demonstrated good

understanding of issues of multiculturalism and cabinet government respectively.

- The great strength of students' achievement is through their active citizenship in the school and the community, from local to international, which was judged outstanding.

Quality of teaching in citizenship

The quality of teaching in citizenship is good.

- Most lessons were good, with strong features to all lessons observed. Strengths included the skilful management of sequences of learning and effective questioning; teachers made regular use of relevant and topical material, such as the elections taking place at the time of this visit.
- Teachers planned lessons well in respect of inclusion of all students through devices such as shared learning and differentiated resources.
- Some lessons were over-ambitious in terms of planned activities and did not provide sufficient time for research or analysis to extend students' knowledge, understanding and skills.
- In examination groups, teachers very effectively equipped students for forthcoming assessments, although at both GCSE and A level, more emphasis might have been placed on illustrative examples to demonstrate the issues being studied.
- Students are very well supported in developing active citizenship through a wide range of opportunities.
- In Key Stage 3, assessment, including marking, is a weaker aspect of teaching.

Quality of the curriculum in citizenship

The quality of the curriculum in citizenship is good.

- Citizenship has a strong base in the curriculum in both Key Stages 3 and 4 and in the wider life of the school.
- In Key Stage 3, the curriculum framework provides a good starting point, but evidence from students' books suggests that it lacks sharpness in medium-term planning. As such the curriculum does not sufficiently underpin progression in knowledge, understanding and skills or provide for reinforcement through planned revisiting of key topics.
- The Key Stage 4 curriculum is currently under review but the school's intention to continue to provide an entitlement to citizenship within a full GCSE RE course is noted.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in citizenship

The effectiveness of leadership and management in citizenship is good.

- Senior leaders have developed and maintained a strong vision for citizenship in the school.
- Rigorous evaluation of citizenship teaching and subject leadership has contributed to improvement in areas that were seen as underperforming.
- Good provision has been made for the subject, including the recruitment of specialist teachers and a secure place in the curriculum.
- The school has great strength in 'student voice', with students actively involved in aspects of school improvement including teaching and learning.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- raising the status of citizenship in Key Stage 3 by ensuring that books provide a good record of achievement and are regularly and constructively marked
- refining curriculum planning to ensure that the scheme of work provides a strong foundation for lesson planning and underpins the progressive development of knowledge, understanding and skills
- reconsidering how planning that focuses on key citizenship concepts and processes can be linked to more holistic assessment against National Curriculum levels
- developing a portfolio of agreed high-quality assessments to help establish common standards in the department.

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.

Yours sincerely

Scott Harrison
Additional Inspector