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Mr J Catton  
Consultant Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Catton

**Ofsted 2012–13 subject survey inspection programme: personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE education)**

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and students, during my visit on 9 and 10 May 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 observation of 10 lessons, two form-time sessions and an assembly.

The overall effectiveness of PSHE education is satisfactory.

**Achievement in PSHE education**

Achievement in PSHE education is satisfactory.

- Students have a good knowledge of how to stay healthy. They understand the dangers of drugs, tobacco and alcohol. Work on sex and relationships education is supporting students to manage personal risk and students have many opportunities to explore different types of relationships.
- Students have many opportunities for developing their understanding and skills in relation to enterprise, careers and the world of work. For example, the 'tenner competition' encourages participating students to use creative ideas to turn £10 into a £400 profit. However, their knowledge of money management and budgeting is not sufficiently extended.

- Students understand well the effects of bullying on emotional well-being including the negative impact and consequences of racist and homophobic language. They demonstrate some levels of independence and are developing confidence in group and discussion activity. However, they do not always listen to each other well.

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

The quality of teaching in PSHE education is satisfactory.

- Most lessons have appropriate objectives and teachers demonstrate effective knowledge. Planning is consistent but tasks are not always planned to meet the range of needs resulting in students doing the same work at the same pace regardless of their abilities. A stronger focus on the development of keywords and terminology is evident but not consistently used. As a result, students with weak literacy skills cannot always fully participate in the lessons.
- Resources are engaging and often provide good debate; for example, on racism and the effects of drug misuse. Information and communication technology is used well to provide visual stimulus. When it is planned into lessons, students enjoy the opportunities for active involvement.
- Where rules for behaviour are clear, sensitive issues are dealt with in a secure environment. However, not all students have the opportunity to develop their skills of communication because much of the learning is passive, too few are involved in the discussions and the use of skilful questioning to draw out students' knowledge and understanding is inconsistent.
- Expectations of the quality of students' work in PSHE education are too low and not commensurate with what teachers expect in other subjects. Assessment opportunities are increasingly being built into lesson plans but they are not always used to judge progress.

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

The quality of the curriculum in PSHE education is satisfactory.

- The curriculum is broad and improvements are being made in the allocation of teaching time. Aspects of PSHE education range from discrete teaching to cross-curricular coverage including good links with other subjects such as catering and religious education.
- The curriculum has been developed to meet the needs of those with disabilities and special educational needs and those whose circumstances make them vulnerable; this includes emotional literacy support, SkillForce, life-skills programmes and the Options East partnerships which enable some students to enjoy personalised curriculum programmes.
- External agencies make expert contributions to PSHE education through skilled adults who provide sex and relationships education to small groups, a range of enterprise activities, and 'No Crime Day'. Theatre companies deliver lively performances on arson, spirituality and future choices.

- The increased number of assemblies adds to the PSHE education programme and reinforces key messages to students. However, opportunities for the development of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are not fully exploited in lessons.
- The focus on financial capability and money management is not coherent and there is insufficient progression from Years 7 to 11.

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

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

- Leaders and managers have ensured that statutory requirements are met and strategies are in place to promote inclusion. However, PSHE education is in a state of transition; some changes are due to be implemented in September 2012 and this has impacted on the current planning, delivery and coherence of the subject.
- Good links with partner agencies support well the personal and social development of students, and the regular Parent Forum is supporting the school in developing aspects of its work.
- Provision for PSHE education, including teaching and learning, is not regularly monitored or reviewed. Some teachers lack the subject knowledge and expertise to deliver it effectively and the quality of work in books is variable.
- An accurate understanding of the strengths of the subject and priorities for improvement is evident, and key actions are well focused in the school development and improvement plan.

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

- improving the monitoring and evaluation of provision in PSHE education to ensure good-quality teaching of the subject
- developing appropriate assessment tasks for PSHE education and ensuring that students have an overview of how well they are doing.

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

**Davinder Dosanjh**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**