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Ms J Armitage  
Headteacher  
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Dear Ms Armitage

### **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 20 and 21 June 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 parts of eight lessons, two tutor periods, two assemblies and several extra-curricular activities.

The overall effectiveness of citizenship is good.

#### **Achievement in citizenship**

Achievement in citizenship is good.

- This judgement reflects a balance of considerable strengths and areas of relative weakness. An important strength is that some students make an outstanding contribution to school and the community through their citizenship action, and in general levels of participation are high. A small number of students take citizenship GCSE as an extra-curricular course; last year all gained grade C or above.
- Evidence from the inspection suggests that achievement is good in citizenship skills such as advocacy and campaigning. These skills are taken further by those students who take part in extra-curricular activities such as 'Agents for Change', the 'Make One Change' campaigns using film and on behalf of organisations such as Amnesty International. Students' responsibilities include the school council, mentoring, and anti-bullying.

- Students' knowledge and understanding of justice, the law and the diversity of the United Kingdom are good, and this is informed by their regular discussion of topical news items. Knowledge and understanding of government and politics are weaker, although sixth form students are very confident in discussing political issues, reflecting their curriculum.
- In general, students' progress is stronger in discussion than in writing. Outstanding use is made of information and communication technology for some citizenship projects.

### **Quality of teaching in citizenship**

The quality of teaching in citizenship is good.

- Lessons were seen in a range of subjects in Key Stage 3 and the sixth form. The vast majority were concerned directly with citizenship learning objectives or made some link to citizenship. The quality of teaching in these lessons was good with some outstanding. Strengths include very good relationships, high quality of discussion elicited by skilled questioning, good management of sequences of lessons that keep students thinking and an emphasis on inclusion.
- The core citizenship programme is taught by class tutors, a long-standing arrangement. As this is taught at one point in the week which did not coincide with the inspection, evidence of the quality of citizenship teaching was drawn from other sources. Tutors from across a range of subjects were positive about the gains from being involved in teaching citizenship and they cited the excellent quality of support they receive.
- The great majority of students interviewed formally and informally said that they enjoy citizenship lessons because of their relevance and the emphasis on discussion and debate. However, they cited a few exceptions, for example tutor groups where writing predominates at the expense of discussion, suggesting some unevenness in teaching quality.
- Assessment is still being developed, with a pilot project currently running. The school has maintained records of attainment in National Curriculum citizenship and detailed reports are provided to parents and carers. As yet, insufficient attention has been paid to ensuring that assessments and data are reliable and valid. The quality of marking seen in a sample of books is good. Students are usefully involved in self-assessment using citizenship 'level ladders'.

### **Quality of the curriculum in citizenship**

The quality of the curriculum in citizenship is good.

- A core programme within personal, social, health and citizenship education, supplemented by work in tutor periods, assemblies, other subjects and activities including a 'Justice Day', combine well to produce a good citizenship curriculum. This is thoughtfully planned against citizenship concepts and processes. Currently, however, lessons tend to be single entities which limit outcomes and lead to fragmentary assessment.

- The curriculum is stronger in the areas of rights and responsibilities, justice and law and UK diversity than in government and politics.
- Extra-curricular provision is strong. Students take part in a wide range of activities involving participation and responsibility, including some with a direct emphasis on change agency and involving activity from local to global levels. This includes campaign activity through media and fund raising. In Key Stage 4 students have the opportunity to take citizenship GCSE as an extra-curricular subject. The curriculum is supplemented by a wide range of visits and visitors. The school makes good use of pupil voice activities and the school parliament is currently reviewing its purpose and structure.

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management in citizenship is good.

- The school has a very strong vision for citizenship and has ensured that time and resources are available in the curriculum and beyond.
- Citizenship is led by a specialist coordinator who has access to appropriate training. Given that there are 35 teachers of citizenship, the main role of the coordinator has been preparation of lessons. These are of good quality and include resources, suggested activities and teachers' notes. The coordinator has also built on a well-established curriculum.
- Self-evaluation is broadly accurate, but teaching commitments mean that the coordinator's monitoring of standards and provision is limited.
- While there has been considerable work done on assessing and recording progress, tasks have not yet been standardised or moderated.

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

- strengthening work on government and politics in the citizenship curriculum
- considering how sequences of lessons can be clustered to enable more sustained work leading to periodic assessment
- developing examples of standards at different levels to inform teachers' assessment practice.

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

Yours sincerely

**Scott Harrison**  
**Additional Inspector**