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22 September 2006

Mrs L Shawhulme
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Dear Mrs Shawhulme

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Physical Education

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 19 and 20 September 2006 to look at work in physical education (PE).

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the subject, the visit had a particular focus on the impact of the Physical Education, School Sport and Club Links (PESSCL) strategy on standards and provision in PE and school sport.

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. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included: interviews with staff, pupils and the School Sport Coordinator (SSC), scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of three lessons.

The overall effectiveness of PE was judged to be satisfactory.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are satisfactory.

- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 core PE is in line with the national average. Year 9 pupils in netball demonstrated effective footwork and could send and receive using a range of passes. In a Year 10 rounders lesson pupils reviewed the key elements of

batting and could tell others about the strengths and weaknesses of their performance.

- In GCSE PE more pupils achieved higher grades in 2006 than in the previous year but the proportion of pupils attaining a C grade or above declined to below the national average.
- Pupils display positive attitudes towards PE; participation rates in lessons and after-school activities are high.

Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

- Lessons have energetic warm ups and structured skill practices, coupled with regular feedback and opportunities for pupils to review their learning.
- Care for pupils of all abilities is good; they speak positively about the efforts the staff make in supporting them and making lessons enjoyable.
- Learning is not always sufficiently planned to meet the needs of all pupils or to encourage them to work independently or think for themselves.
- Assessment is not used effectively to provide pupils with an accurate picture of what they are achieving and what they can do to improve their work.

Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory.

- A broad and generally balanced curriculum ensures pupils in Key Stage 3 exceed the PESSCL target of at least two hours PE and sport per week, but the target is not met in Key Stage 4.
- A good programme of extra-curricular sport is available but there is insufficient monitoring of how many Key Stage 4 pupils participate in at least two hours of high quality PE and sport each week.
- Sports leadership is well established; for the third year running a group of twenty year 11 pupils achieved an award.

Quality of leadership and management

The quality of leadership and management of PE is satisfactory.

- Teachers in the department including the SSC work well together as a team and provide adequate support to a newly qualified teacher.
- Detailed and updated schemes of work exist for most areas of activity.
- Resources and limited indoor accommodation are used effectively to enable pupils to achieve satisfactorily.

- Self- evaluation is under-developed and is not sufficiently focused on raising achievement, particularly GCSE PE.
- Lesson monitoring does not provide teachers with a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve.

The impact of the PESSCL national strategy

The PESSCL national strategy is having a satisfactory impact on improving the quality of provision in PE and school sport.

- An SSC assigned to the school 1 day per week is enhancing curriculum opportunities by engaging more sports coaches to work with the school and by establishing links with sports clubs in the local community.
- Whilst the partnership is making a positive difference to provision, it is having less of an impact on raising standards because it does not focus on the improvement priorities identified in the departments' own development plan.
- The school has not made clear to the partnership development manager the precise professional development needs of staff in the department.

Inclusion

The majority of pupils make satisfactory progress in PE.

- On occasions, lower attaining pupils find difficulty in accessing learning because some tasks are not sufficiently adapted to meet their needs.
- Extra-curricular activities are open to all interested pupils; a large number participate in inter-form and inter-house competitions.
- Pupils with a statement of special educational need are given individual support in lessons from a teaching assistant.
- Alternative activities such as cheerleading and street-dance have encouraged a group of disaffected older girls to re-engage in PE lessons.
- The school has instigated a mentoring scheme for gifted and talented pupils so they can achieve well in school and in their selected sport.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- improve departmental self-evaluation
- improve GCSE PE results
- establish clear, manageable procedures for assessment and target-setting
- match the improvement priorities of the department with the expertise and resources of the SSP.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop PE in the school.

As I explained in my previous letter, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be published on Ofsted's website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

John Mitcheson
Her Majesty's Inspector