

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404045
F 020 7421 6644
www.ofsted.gov.uk



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Miss M O'Sullivan
Headteacher
St Joseph's RC Lower School
Chester Road
Bedford
Bedfordshire
MK40 4 HN

Dear Miss O'Sullivan

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Physical Education

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on Wednesday 4 October 2006 to look at work in physical education (PE).

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

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 and children, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of children's reports and observation of four lessons.

The overall effectiveness of physical education was judged to be satisfactory

Achievement and standards

Achievement in PE is satisfactory.

- Standards are close to those expected nationally in games and swimming. The Foundation Stage profile for 2005/2006 shows that reception age pupils achieve slightly below the expected level for physical development when compared to other Bedfordshire schools.

- Pupils make good progress in swimming. Up-to-date records show that when pupils enter Year 4 approximately one third of them swim competently a minimum distance of 15 metres, with another third achieving standards close to this target.
- By Year 4 pupils understand how specific exercises and an appropriate diet affect their fitness and health. They use a range of creative ways in games to send and receive large balls but they have not refined skills in throwing, catching and kicking to the point where they can be used competently in small team games. They find it difficult to compare performances and use their observations to suggest improvements.
- Pupils enjoy their lessons. They show commitment and enthusiasm and very mature levels of co-operation when working in pairs and as part of a small team. A very small number, mostly boys, exhibit poor listening skills.

Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

- Teaching is satisfactory overall with similar strengths and weaknesses across classes and year groups. Day-to-day planning is very detailed and identifies children with special educational needs. Lessons are well structured, include appropriate use of information and communications technology (ICT), make effective use of additional adult helpers and ensure a good balance between instruction and practice. Tasks are appropriate for the age of the pupils. Class management control and organisation are strong features of all lessons.
- Too often planning describes the activities to be covered rather than the learning to be achieved. Demonstrations are used to celebrate good work rather than to pin-point those aspects of a performance that lead to high quality or those that could be improved. Praise is sometimes used indiscriminately.
- Although assessment of learning features strongly in planning it is not used to carefully define learning objectives or to match tasks to individual and group needs.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is sometimes a barrier to progress in learning specific skills and to ensuring work is progressive through the school.

Quality of provision

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- All pupils are timetabled for two hours of PE in curriculum time and sometimes this is extended in the summer when on-site swimming is provided. Three ten-minute physical activity sessions each week that include, skipping, aerobic exercises and running provide additional health

and fitness benefits. The curriculum is both broad and balanced across the six activities of the National Curriculum.

- Trained play leaders provide structured activities using a range of small equipment during break and lunch times. This programme is very popular and adds further enrichment to the PE curriculum.
- A suitable range of after school clubs is provided but the pupils would like more opportunities to be involved in competitions and tournaments. The participation level in some of the clubs is low.

Leadership and management of PE

The quality of leadership and management is good.

- The new subject leader is committed to improving standards and provision and offers valuable support and advice to colleagues. She has a clear vision of where further improvements are required but it is too early to measure the impact of the most recent development plan. Over a very short period the profile of the subject has been raised throughout the school.
- Planning for the introduction of the School Sport Co-ordinator (SSCO) programme has helped to complete an accurate audit of school provision and set out a list of improvement priorities.
- Good progress has been made in just a few weeks. Some monitoring of lessons has been completed, data collected, staff updated on new initiatives and an assessment system is about to be trialled.

Subject issue – PESSCL Programme

- The school has only entered the SSCO programme this term. It is still too early to see any impact of provision since the partnership is just beginning to draw up plans following the audit.
- The school is familiar with all the expectations of the SSCO programme but advocacy of the wider PESSCL strategy has been poor.

Inclusion

- All pupils are included in PE lessons with excellent support for those with learning difficulties through modified tasks and support from teaching assistants. There is no similar provision for gifted and talented pupils.
- The school has targeted specific pupils to include in the enrichment programme it provides.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- ensuring the new assessment, recording and reporting system is used to provide tasks in lessons that address individual and group needs
- increasing participation levels in after school clubs
- making progress in pupils learning the focus for more incisive monitoring and evaluation
- providing further professional development opportunities for teachers to improve their subject knowledge.

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

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

Yours sincerely

I Howard Todd
Additional Inspector