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Dear Mrs Etheridge

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Physical Education

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on Monday 11 September 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 impact of the Physical Education School Sport and Club links (PESSCL) strategy on improving the quality of PE and school sport in schools.

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 pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' records and evaluations, observation of three lessons and an 'exercise break' session.

The overall effectiveness of PE was judged to be good, with several outstanding features.

Achievement and standards

Achievements and standards in PE are good.

- This confirms the school's data which shows most pupils make good progress in aspects of PE, particularly in games and swimming.

- The standards of work and progress seen in lessons are at least good in games and satisfactory in gymnastics. The younger pupils are able to throw, catch, roll and strike a ball with accuracy and control. They demonstrate good spatial awareness and perform simple skill practices sensibly in pairs. Older pupils are developing good ball and racket skills and can perform a range of gymnastic balances confidently. All pupils enjoy and have very good attitudes to PE; they are motivated, keen and want to learn. Their behaviour is excellent.

Quality of teaching and learning of Physical Education

The quality of teaching observed was good, with some outstanding elements.

- All adults have a very good teaching manner that leads to excellent relationships with their pupils and a purposeful climate for learning. Planning is comprehensive and resources are meticulously prepared in advance. In games sessions, the adults use demonstrations very effectively to explain the correct techniques and tasks are structured carefully to allow the pupils maximum time on activities. Coupled with dynamic, lively teaching, this allows the pupils to learn at a swift pace.
- In gymnastics, excellent attention is given to the safe handling of apparatus, which the pupils carry out expertly. More emphasis should be placed on developing the pupils' appreciation of the aesthetic qualities of gymnastic performance through sustained periods of activity.
- Assessment and record keeping systems are rigorous, easily accessible and updated on a regular basis. Teachers make good use of both formative assessments and the innovative pupil self-evaluation books to monitor progress and set targets for improvement. Pupils receive excellent care and guidance to achieve their best in physical education.

Quality of curriculum

This is judged to be outstanding.

- The curriculum is broad, fully inclusive and finely tuned to the pupils' needs and aspirations. All pupils receive more than the recommended weekly two hours of PE and the variety of activities on offer is impressive. The twice-daily exercise breaks, based on a Finnish model are well planned, purposeful sessions which pupils benefit from and enjoy.
- The range and quality of extra-curricular provision is excellent. The number of pupils participating in competitive events, clubs and festivals is high and the success achieved through these programmes permeates the ethos of the school. The recent visit to take part in a mini Olympics in Finland by pupils, as part of the Comenius 1 project on Healthy Living, and the popular Holiday Sports Camp organised by the school are examples of innovative, creative provision.

- Accommodation is good; resources are carefully maintained and are of a high quality.

Leadership and management of Physical Education

Leadership and management of PE are outstanding.

- The strong leadership shown by you and the subject leader ensures PE enjoys a high school profile. There is a firm commitment to promoting high quality provision and all adults work hard with an impressive team spirit.
- Subject monitoring and evaluation are commendable. This leads to a thorough annual review with a clear plan for further improvement strengthening teacher's subject knowledge in dance and gymnastic remains a priority. Minor adjustments are to be trialled to improve the very good curriculum plans already in place. Training and development are well managed and all adults attend relevant courses regularly.

Subject issue – Impact of the Physical Education School Sport and Club links (PESSCL) strategy

- The school has embraced this initiative whole-heartedly and the sports partnership programme is helping to improve the quality of provision for PE. The subject leader works very well with the school sports coordinator and local schools to create new opportunities for both pupils and adults.
- Professional development programmes and additional resources are extending the range of activities available to pupils which they appreciate. There is a good range of courses, festivals, tournaments, competitions and clubs. The school is using external coaches, students, parents and ex-pupils to enrich current provision well. The subject leader is making a proactive contribution to the development of this initiative.

Inclusion

The inclusion of all learners is central to the school's vision. Pupils rate PE highly and understand how important it is to be healthy. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities receive excellent support and make very good progress. Gifted and talented pupils are identified and monitored; they are encouraged to attend clubs and are targeted for additional tuition from specialists. Excellent questionnaires are sent to parents to seek their views about their child's progress, sporting interests and levels of participation outside of school. The school's analysis of returns is systematic and it responds appropriately to meet requests.

Areas for improvement:

- develop teachers' subject knowledge in dance and gymnastics.

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

Mary Harlow
Her Majesty's Inspector