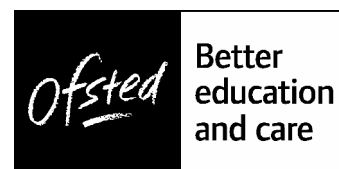


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13 December 2006

Mrs G Espejo  
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Dear Mrs Espejo

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 8 December 2006 to look at work in ESD. 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: reading of departments' analysis of their provision for ESD in advance of the visit, interviews with students and staff, scrutiny of ESD related work and observation of two lessons.

The overall effectiveness of Education for Sustainable Development was judged to be good with some outstanding features.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in ESD are good overall.

- Sixth form students are articulate and knowledgeable about citizenship and stewardship, sustainable change, interdependence, justice and Agenda 21 – to name but a few significant ESD areas they discuss frequently and understand well.
- Younger students are not as confident in their awareness of how ESD issues they study in all subjects are linked together.
- All students are aware of the school's recycling programme.
- Students have an excellent understanding of how to lead healthy and safe lives which the school's promotes through its personal and social education programme and in many other ways. Linked to the school's involvement

with the David Lloyd facility on site, the provision for physical education, and students' uptake of extra-curricular sporting activities, is outstanding.

- Students have a keen sense of inequality and are very generous in their fundraising for charities, for those less fortunate than themselves.

### Quality of teaching and learning of ESD

Too few lessons were observed to make a judgement on the quality of teaching and learning in ESD. Nevertheless, it is clear that teachers promote discussions which help students to develop arguments and opinions on a range of ESD issues. Teachers also promote active learning to develop students' understanding of sustainable development. Students also learn by reading the regularly changed displays which link many subjects to world events and issues.

### Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum for ESD is outstanding. All subjects include a rich focus on ESD. Only a few highlights can be mentioned in this letter:

- The mathematics department's use of the Amnesty International's "Human Rights in the Curriculum" materials is an inspiring example of making a subject relevant to students' lives and helping them to examine major global issues.
- The modern foreign languages department's analysis of its ESD provision under the QCA headings revealed the wealth of cultural and political issues students study, ranging from racism in Classics to Eco-tourism in Spanish, not forgetting consideration of the 2012 London Olympics.
- The PSHE and citizenship programmes include significant issues related to stewardship of the planet, for example food, water and world poverty.
- Through assemblies, the Eco-society, the debating society, Amnesty International meetings, and the sixth form lecture programme, students experience and discuss numerous ESD topics.

### Leadership and management of ESD

Leadership and management of ESD are good.

- ESD is an integral part of the school culture. It is "implicit as well as explicit – it is part of what the school does". Considerable expertise exists in the senior leadership team and many teachers are aware of the importance of ESD issues. The excellent work being done within the school has not yet been co-ordinated.
- The governors, senior managers and the bursar are very aware of the need for the school to be sustainable in all senses. As an example, the recent extension to the main school building confirms that the school has energy efficiency as a high priority.

## Inclusion

The provision for inclusion is outstanding.

- The school has achieved the Healthy School Award at a “high level - being a model of good practice where Every Child Matters is a dominant agenda”.
- Despite the school's clear focus on listening to the views of its students, the school council has not considered environmental issues in the school and local area. This is an area which has been highlighted for future development.
- The school's care for individual students and sensitivity to girls' needs is outstanding. Students feel nurtured and respect each other, valuing different cultures and faiths.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include the need to:

- encourage younger students to appreciate that learning in all subjects can be brought together under the ESD umbrella
- strengthen and extend the role of the school council to include consideration of sustainability and environmental issues in the school and the local community
- bring staff together to share their imaginative expertise in how they deliver and promote ESD issues
- co-ordinate all the excellent work happening within the school to strengthen provision still further.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop Education for Sustainable Development in the school. A copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority/Local Learning and Skills Council and will be published on Ofsted's website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Clare Gillies  
Additional Inspector