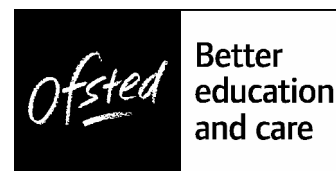


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Mrs Alison Heaton
Headteacher
Meols Cop High School
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Dear Mrs Heaton

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Citizenship

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 18 and 19 September 2006 to look at work in citizenship.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the subject, the visit had a particular focus on provision for teaching and learning about Britain's diversity.

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' work and observation of nine lessons.

The overall effectiveness was judged to be satisfactory, with some good features.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in citizenship are satisfactory.

- Pupils demonstrated good understanding of some aspects of the citizenship curriculum, but overall their knowledge is patchy.
- The lack of assessment in citizenship makes it difficult for staff to identify progress within and between key stages and the school is right to seek to develop this.

- Lessons encourage discussion and debate and pupils have well-developed oral skills of enquiry and communication. However, extended writing is rare, except where pupils are studying citizenship through other subjects.
- The school council is well developed and effective and many pupils participate in community activities within and beyond the school.

Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

- Teachers demonstrate good knowledge and use a range of relevant and topical resources including effective use of information and communications technology.
- Teachers deal very well with sensitive and controversial issues, adopting clear and respected class rules which allow pupils to express their opinions with confidence.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory.

- The school has provided a programme which meets the requirements and incorporates the three strands of the national curriculum, but it is inconsistent in depth and breadth.
- Locating citizenship in the personal and social development (PSD) programme has led to a lack of coherence in the programme of study.

Leadership and management of citizenship

Leadership and management are good.

- The coordinator, who was recently appointed as an advanced skills teacher for citizenship, provides good leadership which includes comprehensive planning materials and effective CPD for teaching staff. She is well supported by the senior management team.
- The school is well aware of its strengths and development needs in the provision of citizenship. Self evaluation documents have highlighted all the main areas of weakness and proposed suitable plans for improvement.

Subject issue: provision for teaching and learning about Britain's diversity

There is not a planned programme to address Britain's diversity, however pupils explore multiculturalism, prejudice, diversity, customs and cultures in PSD; the history of immigration and stereotypical images of the United Kingdom in geography; the range of religious faiths in RE, and migration and tolerance in history.

Inclusion

Teachers plan effectively for the range of pupils they teach and all pupils engage well with the lessons. They are all helped to develop their knowledge and skills in citizenship and to participate in school and wider community activities. However, opportunities for pupils to enhance and develop their citizenship knowledge at Key Stage 4 depends on their option choices as much of the learning takes place in other subjects such as history, geography and business studies.

There are no teaching assistants allocated to citizenship lessons within the PSD programme, even where pupils' needs have been identified.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- to develop the assessment of citizenship
- to deepen the curriculum, particularly at Key Stage 4.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop citizenship 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

Janet Palmer
Her Majesty's Inspector