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Mrs Kate Wood
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Wood

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Citizenship

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 9 and 10 October 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 eight lessons.

The overall effectiveness was judged to be inadequate.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in citizenship are inadequate.

- Pupils have a poor understanding of key issues and there are significant gaps in their knowledge. Their learning at Key Stage 4 depends on their option choices, for instance, they only learn about the economy and the role of business if they choose to study business education. They have a satisfactory understanding of human rights and responsibilities and of religious and cultural diversity.

- Pupils are helped to develop their enquiry skills, but their oral communication in citizenship is poor. They participate in some school and community based activities but it is not a curriculum entitlement and is neither monitored nor assessed. Participation is strong however in the sixth form where most are involved in the Millennium Volunteers Award.
- Progress from Key Stages 3 to 4 is unsatisfactory because some topics are taught at one Key Stage only and achievement has not been assessed or tracked.
- Pupils on the school council are enthusiastic about their role but their responsibilities are limited. Some pupils cannot identify their school representatives.

Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

- Teachers use a range of approaches including information and communications technology to engage pupils. Pupils are aware of the lesson objectives and are beginning to know their levels and targets for improvement.
- Lessons are not always sufficiently challenging and are often characterised by too much teacher exposition and passive learning. Pupils are not given enough opportunity to develop their oral skills or work independently.
- The quality of citizenship teaching on the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) programme is good.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is inadequate.

- The issue of human rights and responsibilities is satisfactorily addressed but many other areas of the National Curriculum programme are only touched upon and some are not taught at all.
- Some modules offered as citizenship have only tenuous links to the National Curriculum and not all teachers understand the difference between citizenship and personal, social and health education.
- Teachers of other subjects delivering cross curricular citizenship do not fully understand the requirements. Their plans do not identify the elements of the citizenship programme they are teaching and they do not assess pupils' progress in citizenship.
- Pupils have some opportunities to research topical and moral issues and justify their personal opinions. However they rarely engage in active citizenship through participation in real issues or campaigns.

Leadership and management of citizenship

Leadership and management are inadequate.

- The leadership team have plans to change how citizenship is delivered but have not effectively analysed what is required or provided a vision for citizenship in the context of the wider school ethos. There is no reference to citizenship as a priority for development in the school self evaluation form.
- There are insufficient resources for citizenship to be taught effectively. There is no designated subject leader, insufficient training of staff and too little dedicated teaching time.
- The 2003 audit of cross curricular provision has not been analysed for effectiveness, revisited or monitored. The school has recently attempted to address some of these issues but changes have yet to impact on the quality of provision.

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

The school plans satisfactorily for teaching about diversity. There is a module in the Year 7 programme on Britain's diversity and pupils' learning is further developed in religious education lessons. Whole school events which celebrate the diverse communities in the school help support pupils' understandings. Pupils treat each other with respect around the school and in lessons.

Inclusion

Teaching assistants effectively support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in citizenship lessons and pupils undertaking the ASDAN Certificate of Personal Effectiveness (COPE) receive good provision. However, there is insufficient monitoring of achievement and standards in citizenship or pupil participation in school and wider community activities to enable the school to identify how different groups of students are progressing and ensure they are all receiving their entitlement.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- to raise achievement and standards in citizenship
- to ensure the curriculum meets requirements and is coherent
- to improve the monitoring of teaching and learning
- to improve the assessment and tracking of pupils' progress
- to improve subject leadership and staff training.

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