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16 January 2007

Mr Blenkinsop
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Dear Mr Blenkinsop

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Physical Education

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 13 and 14 December 2006 to look at work in physical education (PE).

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the subject 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, students and the school sports coordinator, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of five partial lessons.

The overall effectiveness of PE was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are good.

- Students from a diverse range of backgrounds achieve equally and make good progress relative to their starting points and capabilities. By the end of Key Stage 3 standards are equal to those seen nationally.
- Students continue to make good progress in Years 10 and 11. They lead effective warm ups, evaluate how well they and others are doing

and suggest useful ways of improving performance, particularly in games activities and fitness training.

- The 2005 GCSE PE results of well above average were not sustained this year and fell to below average, reflecting the trend of fluctuating results over the past five years. The majority of students achieve better in PE than in most of their other subjects. Girls do not achieve as well as boys, mainly because they choose not to engage in enrichment activities to improve their performance.
- Over a third of students in Key Stage 4 and a small proportion in the sixth form achieve an award in sports leadership.
- Students enjoy PE; they behave well, cooperate with staff and other pupils and lead healthy, active lifestyles.

Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

- Teaching and learning is consistently good. A large department of ten qualified staff develop good working relations with students; they expect them to show initiative and to take responsibility for organising and leading others.
- Teachers are particularly effective at facilitating learning; students work by themselves, in pairs and in small groups for sustained periods of time and teachers appropriately intervene to provide good advice on how to improve their work.
- Assessment of student progress is satisfactory. The majority of students understand how well they are doing, but very few know exactly what they need to do to achieve a higher standard of performance.
- Students with physical disabilities are integrated very effectively into lessons and are given good support from a specialist teaching assistant within the PE department.

Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- All students achieve the PESSCL target of a minimum of two hours PE and school sport in both Key Stages within curriculum time, students in Years 8 and 9 receive three hours of PE.
- Over half of all students regularly participate in a wide range of enrichment activities before school, during lunchtimes and after school. An increasing number and range of activities for girls has been introduced to encourage their participation.
- All students are entered for the GCSE PE short course in Year 10 and an increasing number progress onto the full course in Year 11. A small proportion of more able students are entered for the GCSE examination

in Year 9. Vocational courses in sport and coaching qualifications are developing in the sixth form but are not available yet in Key Stage 4.

Leadership and management of PE

Leadership and management are good.

- Subject leaders are willing to adopt new initiatives and work with a range of partners to improve provision and raise student achievement.
- Well developed self-evaluation and quality assurance procedures have led to some significant improvements being made. The department is taking appropriate action to raise the profile of girls in PE and sport; however, it is too early to see the full impact of this.
- Improvement plans are completed each year but some priorities are not given sufficient time to become fully established and some are not thoroughly evaluated to accurately gauge their impact on learning.

The impact of the PESSCL national strategy

The national PESSCL strategy is having a good impact on improving the quality of provision in PE and school sport for students in the sports college and its family of primary schools.

- The school achieved the Sportsmark award in 2006 and all primary schools in the partnership have gained the Activemark award.
- Several local sports clubs use the school's facilities and encourage students to become junior players. The school makes extensive use of sports coaches to deliver its own football academy programme and increase the range of extra-curricular clubs.
- The school hosts the manager of the school sports partnership and is establishing the school as a hub for community sports participation and development in the borough.
- Some progress has been made in promoting the ten outcomes for high quality PE but this is superficial and is not yet embedded.

Inclusion

The majority of students make good progress in PE.

- The school is using its specialist status to tackle the barriers to learning faced by students well and ensure they enjoy school and achieve well.
- Individual students with a statement of special educational need are known well and their progress is tracked effectively. Students arriving mid-way through the school year are integrated effectively and mix well with other students.
- Gifted and talented students receive high quality football and tennis coaching and more able students are taught together in mixed gender classes to raise overall achievement and to enhance girls' performance.

- An outstanding after-school club for students with learning difficulties and disabilities, including those from a neighbouring special school provides weekly opportunities to participate in sport and receive high quality support from qualified staff and other students.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- firmly embed the range of strategies recently introduced to raise the profile and engagement of girls in PE and school sport and evaluate thoroughly their effectiveness
- refine assessment procedures so all students have a full understanding of what they have to do to improve their work to attain higher standards
- ensure that priorities for improvement are given sufficient time to become fully established and are evaluated thoroughly to secure long-term improvement.

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

John Mitcheson
Her Majesty's Inspector