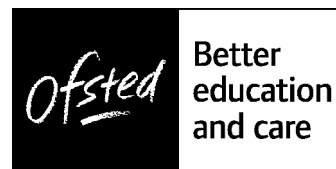


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Ms Smith  
Head teacher  
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Dear Ms Smith

Ofsted survey inspection programme 2006/07- physical education

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 23 January to look at work in swimming.

As outlined in my initial letter, the visit had a particular focus on the impact of the PESSCL strategy in improving the standards and quality of provision in swimming.

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 key school staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of a swimming lesson. I looked at facilities and met with Partnership Development Manager, the School Sports Co-ordinator and representatives from the local authority including the Business Development Manager and the Swimming Development Unit Coordinator.

The overall effectiveness of swimming provision was judged to be outstanding.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in swimming are excellent.

- At the beginning of Year 4, 60% of pupils are unable to swim the expected 25m however, by the end of Year 4, 88% are able to swim

25 metres (25m). Those that cannot access top up lessons in Years 5 and 6, so that by the end of Year 6, all pupils are able to swim at least 25m. This represents excellent achievement and compares favourably with the national average of 80%, and means standards are above average. More able pupils go on to achieve distances in excess of 100m, while all non swimmers eventually reach the expected threshold.

- In terms of the relative progress of different groups of pupils, there is no difference between boys or girls, pupils with physical disabilities, or between different ethnic groups, however, vulnerable pupils such as those with complex social and behavioural needs tend to reach standards that are below those of their peers.

### Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning in swimming is excellent.

- The teaching is undertaken by well qualified and experienced local authority trained swimming instructors, with a minimum of Level 2 accreditation. The quality of the teaching is reflected in the very good progress the vast majority of pupils make.
- Lessons are well planned, with expert instruction and extended opportunities provided for pupils to acquire, practice and refine their skills, knowledge and understanding of swimming.
- Teachers established very positive working relationships with the pupils, who responded well to them. A range of differentiated tasks, good pace, high activity rate and progressive learning challenges that are tailored to the needs of the pupils characterise these lessons. A high teacher to pupil ratio facilitates good levels of guidance and support. Attendance and participation rates are good and pupils report that they enjoy lessons and gain a real sense of achievement when they make progress. Attitudes to learning and standards of behaviour are also good.
- Assessment practice is very good. The pupils receive a baseline assessment at the beginning of the swimming programme and are grouped accordingly. Throughout the sessions staff maintain an on-going record of the pupils' progress and where appropriate they are moved up a group. At the end of the programme the pupils are formally assessed and receive one of several awards relating to their level of competence.

### Quality of curriculum

The curriculum is excellent.

- The programme is well conceived, structured and implemented. It meets all requirements of the PE National Curriculum.

- Pupils access a concentrated block of swimming which involves lessons every day for three weeks. This promotes excellent continuity and progression in the pupils' learning.
- Provision is inclusive and access is open to all Year 4 pupils, including those with learning difficulties and or disabilities. This is supplemented by top up lessons in Years 5 and 6 for those who fail to reach the recommended benchmark. Schemes of work are suitable and curriculum mapping is appropriate. These are supplied by the local authority as part of the service level agreement in place.
- The school makes use of the local leisure centre pool. It has a well equipped learner pool and the more able pupils also make use of the main pool. There are good levels of learning aids and resources to support curriculum delivery.

### Leadership and management

Leadership and management are good overall.

- Leadership and management in relation to the provision of swimming within the school and indeed across the authority are good with some exemplary features. This is the case at most levels, with the work of the local authority particularly noteworthy. There is very effective collaboration between the school and the local authority, which ensures the programme runs smoothly on a day to day basis, and that everyone in the chain is working effectively to ensure targets are met. This is underpinned by the good support of the headteacher.
- There is a clear rationale in terms of the delivery strategy and all the respective policies and procedures relating to safeguarding pupil' are satisfied.
- The local authority has an accurate view of the quality of provision, and in particular the quality of teaching. All staff are routinely monitored and reassessed and a central record is kept of the standards pupils reach. There is a good awareness of the strengths and areas for further development. Scrutiny of the authority's action plans reveal a coherent strategy for continued development. Regular meetings are held where issues are discussed and ideas shared.

### Subject issue -the impact of the PESSCL 'Top-Up' programme

- The PESSCL strategy is having a good impact on improving the swimming standards attained by pupils. The 'Top Up' programme is effectively targeting those pupils who have not met the 25m requirement and ensuring that all of them successfully attain it by the end of Year 6.
- The higher teacher to pupil ratios made possible by the top up funding is also having a very beneficial impact on the quality of learning. A number of the less experienced pupils are thriving as a result of the

individual support and guidance they receive, which in turn is boosting their water confidence and success rates.

## Inclusion

- Pupils' progress is underpinned by an inclusive learning climate. Teachers are supportive and this sets pupils at their ease and gives them confidence.
- There is good evidence that provision is equally accessible to all pupils at the school. The local authority adopts a very sensitive approach to removing potential barriers to participation and has introduced a number of measures to promote race, sex and disability equality in both its policy and practice and in terms of access to its facilities.
- The differentiated nature of provision meant that there was extension provision for the most able learners and additional support for the less able.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- improving school to club links
- sharing information relating to the numbers of pupils unable to swim 25m as part of existing transfer data submitted to secondary schools
- looking at ways to further support the progress of the most vulnerable pupils
- begin to monitor more rigorously the relative success rates of black and minority ethnic pupils.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop swimming 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 Young  
Her Majesty's Inspector