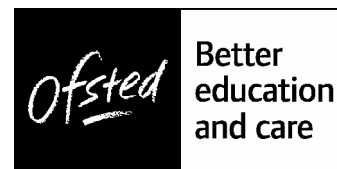


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Mrs C Wellington
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Wellington

Ofsted survey inspection programme 2006/07- physical education

Survey on the impact of the Physical Education School Sport and Club Links (PESSCL) strategy on improving the standards of swimming in schools

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 30 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 staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation and analysis of pupils' reports.

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

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in swimming are inadequate.

- Standards in swimming are well below the national average and below the average of the local authority. Performance is weaker than at the time of

the last inspection and there has been a decline in the percentage of pupils able to swim the recommended 25 metres by the end of Key Stage 2 in each of the last two years.

- There is no difference in the progress made by boys and girls or different ethnic groups but standards that all pupils achieve are not high enough when compared to their capabilities, starting points and national expectations.
- Knowledge and understanding of safe swimming, personal survival, possible hazards and 'reach and rescue' techniques is very good.
- The pupils say they enjoy swimming. They speak confidently and with pride about what they have achieved in lessons and everyone participates. They would like more lessons and the opportunity to be involved in competitions.

Quality of teaching and learning

- No lessons were observed during the visit.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory.

- Pupils in Year 5 receive one hour and twenty minutes of physical education each week over the one and a half terms that swimming forms part of the curriculum. The time provided is just adequate to deliver the National Curriculum programme of study for swimming. There is a very effective programme delivered by the local authority to teach pupils the importance of safe swimming and survival techniques.
- Under present arrangements there is no planned curricular or extra-curricular opportunity for non-swimmers in Year 6 to reach the required National Curriculum expectation
- Annual visits to the local fire station and a residential outdoor and adventure centre enrich learning about water safety.
- The school has not used the Swimming Charter or the wider PESSCL strategy to evaluate provision or consider its role and responsibility in relation to other stakeholders.

Leadership and management of subject

The quality of leadership and management is inadequate overall but satisfactory within the school.

- The subject leader and class teacher are both very committed to raising standards. The record of achievement for each pupil in swimming is detailed and regularly updated.

- Very good links have been established with parents to ensure that any reluctant pupils participate and any issues related to participation by minority ethnic groups are managed sensitively.
- There is no system to monitor teaching and learning in lessons. Any findings from local authority self-evaluation have not been communicated to the school. Consequently the precise reasons for underachievement have not been identified.
- Roles and responsibilities of the school, the local sports partnership and the local authority are not clearly defined.

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

- There is no evidence to show the 'TOP-UP' schemes have made a positive impact in the school.
- Funding to provide a third teacher for the Year 5 class has not raised standards despite a reduced pupil/teacher ratio. The numbers identified in the 'TOP-UP' data return includes all pupils that would have accessed swimming as part of their normal swimming entitlement.
- Data from the Partnership return shows only 33% of the 190 pupils involved in the TOP-UP programme achieved the 25 metres Key Stage 2 standard.
- Pupils in Year 6 in 2006 that were unable to meet the National Curriculum requirement missed the opportunity to do so before leaving school. The proposed plans to address this issue in summer 2007 have not been discussed or agreed with the school.
- Documentation explaining strategies used by the local authority through devolved provision for swimming teaching is dated. It makes no reference to new programmes or recent changes in personnel.

Inclusion

- Provision is good, it ensures all pupils are included in swimming lessons and have equal access to the programme. Planning is provided at two/three levels in small teaching groups with progressive tasks suited to the age and ability of pupils. The syllabus has a focus on skill acquisition and safety techniques with little reference to the other National Curriculum strands.
- The class teacher is used to support individual pupils with special needs and to record progress for the whole class.
- One pupil has been identified as talented, and he receives additional support for swimming at a local club.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- raising standards by ensuring pupils in Year 6 benefit from the TOP-UP funding that is provided

- agreeing a suitable system to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in lessons
- providing units of work and lesson plans that identify opportunities to deliver all four strands of the National Curriculum
- engaging more with the proposals in the Swimming Charter and PESSCL strategy to improve lines of communication and to clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the various partners involved in the delivery of swimming
- including swimming provision in the next action plan for the school and for the SSCO partnership
- providing the opportunity for pupils to experience a competition.

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

Howard Todd
Additional Inspector