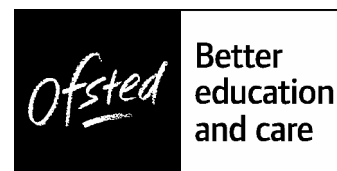


Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404045
F 020 7421 6855
www.ofsted.gov.uk



28 February 2007

Mrs C Robinson
Headteacher
Lowfield Community Primary School
London Road
Sheffield
South Yorkshire
S2 4NJ

Dear Mrs Robinson

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 07 February to look at work in physical education (PE).

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, analysis of pupils' reports and observation of two lessons.

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

Achievement and standards

- Standards in swimming in Key Stage 2 are satisfactory. The school's records indicate that standards are at or above expected levels for half of the pupils in Year 6. Pupils do not start swimming lessons at school until they enter Year 6. At this point the majority of pupils are unable to swim and several lack confidence in water.
- Achievement for most pupils is good. By the end of Year 6, almost all pupils have gained water confidence and started to swim short distances. 'Top up' sessions are appropriately targeted at pupils who are close to achieving the National Curriculum award after two terms of swimming. Last year outcomes from these sessions were only partially successful; two of eight pupils attending achieved the national standard. As swimming lessons do not start until Year 6, many pupils who might achieve the expected level in swimming have insufficient time in which to do so.
- Pupils' personal development and well being are significantly enhanced by having the chance to learn to swim. The Year 6 pupils interviewed understand how swimming can help them keep fit and stay safe.

Quality of teaching and learning

- No swimming lessons were observed during the inspection. Pupils are taught by swimming instructors employed by the local authority (LA). The ratio of instructors to pupils is very favourable and pupils benefit from being taught in ability groups. The good progress pupils make in the short time they are swimming suggests that teaching is good. A discussion with pupils about their learning indicates that this is also good. Good records are kept by the swimming instructors of pupils' progress and attendance; these are transferred to an electronic record which is stored efficiently by the school.
- Two PE lessons were observed during the visit, Year 6 gymnastics and Year 5 games. The quality of teaching in these lessons was satisfactory. Most pupils made suitable progress with acquiring, developing and applying their skills but less emphasis was placed on evaluating and improving performances and on aiming for high quality outcomes. Pupils could have been challenged more and teacher talk dominated the gymnastics lesson reducing the time for pupils to be active. One particularly good feature of the games lesson was the promotion of good sporting behaviour.
- The school does not track pupils' progress in PE, although the end of year reports written for parents give an indication of pupils' achievements but not in swimming. More precise records are kept for children's progress in Reception including a very good photographic record of children's outcomes in physical development. Using ICT to support teachers' assessments in PE is underdeveloped in other classes in the school.

Quality of curriculum

- The school timetable indicates that all pupils have two hours of PE in curriculum time. The school's curriculum map shows that dance, gymnastics and games activities are organised for all year groups in Key Stages 1 and 2. Athletics is included for older pupils as well as swimming in Year 6.
- The school recognises that a better balance between the various aspects of PE is required in some year groups. Teachers plan their lessons using national and published schemes of work but there is not an overall scheme running through the school to ensure continuity and progression in teaching and learning.
- The swimming curriculum is designed by the LA. Swimming instructors follow the LA scheme of work which leads towards pupils achieving the National Curriculum standard; the school has its own copy.

Leadership and management

- Improving provision and standards in PE is a school improvement priority for next year. Subject leadership has recently changed and the current subject leader is very new to the role. She is sensibly using the PESSCL programme and primary link teacher training to improve her leadership and management skills. She is also benefiting from good guidance and support from the school sports coordinator. A start has begun on assessing the quality of provision by asking teachers to complete an evaluation of their views of provision and training needs in PE. Currently the subject leader has insufficient knowledge of the quality of teaching and learning and standards in PE, particularly in Key Stage 2.
- The school's swimming programme is managed by the LA. The funding allocated to the sports partnership for 'top up' swimming has been passed on to the LA. The partnership development plan does not include a priority for improving outcomes in swimming and the school and partnership are not monitoring and evaluating the school's swimming programme.

Inclusion

- Involvement in the PESSCL programme has provided pupils with the chance to experience a wider range of sports activities. The school's learning mentor coordinates and monitors pupils' engagement in extra curricular activities. These are mostly organised for older pupils but there are good plans to include more pupils in a wider range of activities later in the year. Girls' participation has also been targeted through organising cheer-leading and a dance exercise class.
- There are also good proposals to train lunchtime staff and older pupils to support purposeful play activities. The school recognises that individual pupils have special talents in aspects of PE and sport but does not organise any additional provision. Similarly there are no special

programmes available for pupils who may benefit from improving their coordination skills.

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

- Although the school has had support for improving the teaching of gymnastics, the impact of involvement in the PESSCL programme on improving the curriculum has been limited.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- consider extending the swimming programme in Key Stage 2 to enable more pupils to achieve the national standard by the time they leave the school in Year 6
- establish a suitable system for assessing, recording and reporting pupils' progress in PE
- use the involvement in the PESSCL programme to improve provision, to raise standards and achievement and to increase pupils' participation in sports activities
- provide additional challenges for pupils who are talented, and support for pupils whose achievement is below that which is expected for their age
- strengthen subject leadership and management, particularly monitoring and evaluation.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop PE and 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

Robert McKeown
Her Majesty's Inspector