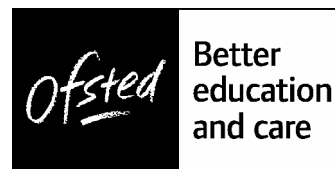


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Dear Mrs Peacock

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 08 February 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, observation of a lesson and swimming facilities.

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

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in swimming are good.

- Standards in swimming are well above the national average. The Year 5 profile for 2006/7 indicates that 74% of pupils in this age group can already achieve the recommended 25 metres standard in the National Curriculum. There is no difference between the performance of boys and girls.
- Pupils make good progress in swimming. In each of the last three years only one or two pupils in each cohort left the school unable to achieve the national curriculum standard. The efficiency of stroke technique, personal survival skills and understanding of how swimming contributes to health and fitness are all outstanding.
- Pupils are less secure in their knowledge of hazardous swimming locations and reach and rescue techniques. Their ability to judge strengths and limitations in their own and others' performances and to contribute ideas of their own is also less well developed.
- Pupils show exemplary behaviour, even through long periods of inactivity waiting to enter the water. They enjoy the work; motivation is high and attendance excellent. They persevere to complete tests and apply physical effort independent of the teacher.

Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

- Teaching is satisfactory overall but ranged in quality from inadequate to good depending on the leadership and management of groups.
- Grouping by ability allows the weaker pupils to make good progress. Learning for these pupils is well planned and subject knowledge is sufficient to identify where basic technique can be improved. Teaching is sensitive to pupils that are less secure in water. Their needs are well provided for by making effective use of teaching assistants and the good quality buoyancy aids that are available. In these groups time is used productively, a wider range of teaching strategies applied and consequently a higher level of intellectual engagement.
- Where there is underachievement it is because measurement of performance is driving the lessons and there is no new learning. In these groups pupils are inactive for far too long. The lack of progress is a consequence of poor class organisation and understanding of how swimming can contribute to the requirements of the National Curriculum for PE.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- Forty hours of curriculum time are allocated to swimming and each lesson lasts forty minutes. This level of provision is well above the national average. Sensibly, the school has blocked work into units that last a

minimum of half a term. This has improved continuity and progress. The pupils in Year 6 prefer this approach and feel they learn quicker.

- The high standards are reflected in the success of the school in the limited competition programme. Pupils would like more competition opportunities in the school and with other schools.
- Provision for swimming reflects the 'Investors in Pupils' and 'Every Child Matters' ethos that permeates the building and displays. For example, ensuring that every child is given help according to their need and successes are celebrated through the award of certificates in school assemblies.

Leadership and management

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory.

- The subject leader is enthusiastic and committed to improvement. She has helped other members of the teaching and non-teaching staff to improve their knowledge of swimming. Week by week arrangements run smoothly. Documentation is very thorough and well organised. Records of performance from the LA 'Swim Rite' guide are used to track individual progress and these are used to write informative annual reports for parents.
- Monitoring and evaluation strategies are weak. The school has not looked closely at whether the high percentage of curriculum time invested in swimming is appropriate for all pupils, given their starting points in Year 5. Similarly, the contribution that swimming teaching makes to the wider national curriculum programme of study has not been assessed.

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

- The 'TOP-UP' programme has made very limited impact in the partnership and in the school. Only 18 pupils across the partnership have completed the course so far with 66% of them achieving the 25 metres expectation. Attendance has been poor at only 67%.
- The decision to give all schools in the partnership the same number of places was not appropriate. It resulted in the selection of Year 5 pupils from one school that still had five terms of swimming as part of the normal curriculum. This inflexibility restricted attendance by some of the weakest Year 6 swimmers in the wider 'family' of schools. A delayed start to the programme meant that Year 6 pupils in 2006 missed the opportunity to attend.
- The partnership worked in full consultation with the LA Swimming Development Officer but not with the headteachers of the schools involved. No audit was taken to establish the exact number of children unable to swim. This data is still not available.

- Although there is a register of attendance and record of performance there is no system or identified person to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning.
- The high quality writing of one pupil, exemplified how much he enjoyed the course and the success of reaching the required standard.

Inclusion

- Provision is good overall. Teaching in ability groups particularly helps pupils who are non-swimmers or improving swimmers. Sometimes the groups are disproportionate in size and higher attaining groups make less progress because there is more of them and tasks are not sufficiently challenging and variable for the most able. Good emphasis is placed on pupils collaborating during swimming lessons.
- The school is aware of gifted and talented pupils in swimming and their names are included on the register.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- ensuring that the teaching of swimming contributes to delivery of all strands of the PE National Curriculum programme of study
- reviewing the effectiveness of time given to teaching swimming, particularly for the large number of pupils who achieve standards well beyond the National Curriculum expectation
- clearly defining the roles of those responsible for delivery of swimming and more rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning in lessons
- improving communication between the four schools in the partnership so that all children unable to swim in Year 6 are given the opportunity to attend a course before they move to secondary school.

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/Local Learning and Skills Council 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