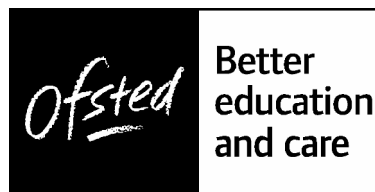


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Mrs C Moore
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Dear Mrs Moore

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 01 March 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 satisfactory.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in swimming are satisfactory.

- Standards at the end of Year 6 in 2006 were below the national average. However, with approximately 70% of pupils achieving the recommended 25 metres they were much closer to the national average than in any of the three previous years, where the number meeting the requirement was never more than 40%.
- Pupils in Year 6 in 2006 made good progress. The number of non-swimmers able to achieve 25 metres doubled when compared to their attainment prior to commencing the programme in Year 5. There was no difference in the standards achieved by boys and girls.
- The ability of younger pupils to move with swimming aids and to propel themselves using controlled arm and leg actions is developing well. Older pupils show good technique in a range of recognised strokes but weaker performers are unable to sustain an efficient style over distances up to and beyond 25 metres.
- Pupils' understanding of how swimming contributes to health and fitness and their knowledge of personal survival and rescue techniques is satisfactory.
- For many pupils swimming is their favourite lesson. They listen well, work hard and become engrossed with progress in their learning. They would like more time in the pool and an opportunity to be involved in competitions.

Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

- The secure subject knowledge of swimming instructors allows almost all pupils to make good progress in learning. Tasks are well structured to build confidence through small progressive steps. Activities are suitably matched to the different ability levels of the pupils in each class.
- Praise is used judiciously and firm control coupled with a good sense of humour ensures pupils enjoy and engage in all the learning activities.
- The progress made by pupils is carefully recorded against the local authority (LA) guidelines and data is used to inform lesson planning, class grouping arrangements and to reward individual successes.
- Learning objectives for lessons, although clear to the teacher, are not shared with the pupils and they are not certain what they need to do to achieve the next level in their performance. There is little opportunity for pupils to contribute their thoughts and ideas during lessons or to make judgements about their own and others' performance.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory.

- The overall time for swimming across Key Stage 2 and the way delivery is planned is satisfactory. The long break between Year 5 and Year 6 leads

to discontinuity, particularly for the significant group of pupils that start Year 5 as non-swimmers.

- The recent decision to restrict provision in Year 6 to pupils unable to meet the national curriculum requirement ensures attention is given to those pupils most in need of extra support.
- Guidelines for swimming provision produced by the LA are good. They clearly identify roles and responsibilities, provide helpful guidance to non-specialist staff and ensure teaching embraces the physical education curriculum.
- Only a very small minority of pupils benefit from extra curricular provision. There is no opportunity to participate in competitions.

Leadership and management

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory overall.

- Most aspects of leadership and management in school are good. The subject leader is committed to improving standards. Records of achievement are detailed and updated regularly. A 'baseline' has been created from which to measure the progress of each individual pupil.
- The School Sport Co-ordinator programme has been used effectively in the school to provide additional professional development opportunities for staff. They are given good access to additional teaching resources such as the 'Top Swimming' cards that have helped to inform and update subject knowledge.
- Monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of planned provision and the delivery of lessons is not sufficiently rigorous to inform further improvements that could be made.

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

The impact of the PESSCL 'Top-Up' programme is satisfactory.

- Data shows that the short pilot 'Top Up' programme that operated in four schools made a significant impact on standards. Of the 39 pupils in the partnership that undertook the three day course 85% successfully achieved the national curriculum requirement to swim 25 metres. However, the funding was targeted at pupils near to achieving the national curriculum standard, some of whom were in Year 5 and would have achieved the target as part of their normal curriculum programme. This approach has failed to make provision for the least able swimmers in Year 6 (the main target group for funding), in each of the 'pilot' schools.
- Planned provision through the 'pilot' was completed without a careful audit of the number of Year 6 pupils in the partnership that were the weakest swimmers.
- Lack of pool availability and the high percentage of non-swimmers across the schools in the partnership made it difficult to plan a fully inclusive programme.

- Consultation and communication between the various stakeholders has been very effective with each 'party' fully understanding their contribution to the programme. The template used to record the impact of the 'pilot' contains useful insights into what improvements 'looked like'.

Inclusion

- All pupils are well supported in lessons, especially those with learning difficulties and disabilities. Support assistants work together with the swimming instructors and class teacher to ensure all pupils participate, work in small groups and are given tasks appropriate to their need.
- There is no specific provision for gifted and talented pupils and the school provides no opportunity for competitive swimming.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

The school

- continuing to raise standards
- sharing with pupils what they are expected to achieve in lessons and over time
- providing pupils with a competitive experience in swimming.

The partnership

- ensuring it is aware of all the least able pupils in swimming in Year 6 and agreeing with the local authority how best to provide for them
- offering further National Curriculum training to pool instructors
- agreeing how delivery of the Top-Up programme will be monitored and evaluated by the local authority.

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

I Howard Todd
Additional Inspector