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Dear Mrs Gibbard

Ofsted survey inspection programme 2007- 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 March 2007 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 a brief look at facilities.

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

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in swimming are good.

- Pupils begin swimming in the Reception year and make good progress so that by the end of Year 3 standards are well above average. Over ninety-five percent of pupils can swim the recommended distance of twenty five metres by the end of Key Stage 2.
- Progress is good due to the combination of weekly lessons in the school's outdoor learner pool, good quality instruction and a high level of care from parents who assist on the poolside.
- Pupils enjoy learning to swim. They say that they feel safe in the shallow water and are keen to achieve awards for swimming over increasing distances and various water skills.

Quality of teaching and learning of swimming

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

- A qualified and experienced instructor delivers all swimming lessons to small groups of learners, allowing her to develop good relations with pupils and make best use of the space available in the water.
- A good scheme of work is used to plan lessons for pupils of different abilities and accurate records of pupils' progress are regularly shared between the instructor and subject leader.
- PE lesson observations, including swimming are too infrequent and do not always identify what is required to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- Two twenty-minute swimming lessons each week throughout the summer term provides pupils with regular and continuous opportunities to acquire confidence in water and develop a range swimming strokes.
- Pupils who cannot swim twenty five metres by the end of swimming lessons in Year 3 are provided with further lessons in Year 4 to ensure they can attain the National Curriculum requirements for swimming before the end of the Key Stage.
- There are no opportunities for more able swimmers, including those identified as gifted and talented to swim competitively with pupils from other schools.

Leadership and management of swimming

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory.

- A relatively new subject leader works effectively with the swimming instructor to coordinate lessons and is benefiting from training and support provided by the school sports coordinator.

- You ensure that pupils are safe and well cared for by providing parents wishing to help with swimming lessons with suitable training that informs them of procedures and the school's code of conduct.
- The school is unaware of how many, and which individual pupils regularly participate in at least two hours of high quality PE and sport within and outside of the curriculum.

Subject issue - the impact of the PESSCL top-up programme

- The school sports partnership plans to deliver its first top-up intensive swimming scheme during the summer term 2007. Managers are unsure about the most effective way of delivering additional swimming lessons and current plans for top-up swimming are not as clear as they should be.
- The numbers of non swimmers within all schools in the partnership have been identified and those pupils requiring top-up swimming lessons have been prioritised. A delivery model and timescale to deliver the scheme have not yet been agreed or shared with schools.

Inclusion

- Almost all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities swim regularly. Despite the school's efforts three pupils, with the support of their parents refuse to participate in swimming lessons.
- Pupils of a similar swimming ability are grouped together for lessons in classes of 10 which helps beginners to gain confidence and provides further challenge for more able swimmers.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- maintain an accurate record of how many, and which individual pupils regularly participate in at least two hours of high quality PE and sport within and outside of the curriculum
- prepare a regular cycle of lesson observations to improve the quality of teaching and learning in all PE lessons, including swimming
- work with the school sports coordinator to identify opportunities for more able swimmers, including those identified as gifted and talented.

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 Mitcheson
Her Majesty's Inspector