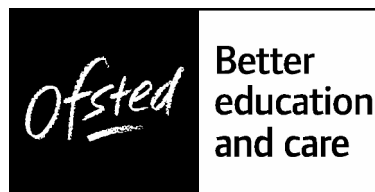


Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404045
F 0207 4216855
www.ofsted.gov.uk



21 March 2007

Mrs Thornton
Headteacher
Low Ash Primary School
Wrose Lane
Wrose
Shipley
West Yorkshire
BD18 1AA

Dear Mrs Thornton

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 and those of the Hanson/Bradford North School Sport Partnership and Bradford City Swimming Development Unit (BCSDU), during my visits on Tuesday 27 February and Friday 02 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 and observation of a swimming lesson.

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

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are satisfactory

- At the start of the current programme of 18 lessons, around one quarter of Year 5 pupils are confident swimmers in deep water, a similar proportion are non-swimmers. Around half are improving swimmers who are working towards National Curriculum expectations.
- Most pupils make the progress expected of them. In three of the past four years around 85% or more of pupils have achieved National Curriculum standards. One third of these pupils achieve good personal survival skills.
- Each year, a small number of pupils, around five or six, who have had little prior experience of swimming do not reach National Curriculum standards. They achieve basic water confidence but the course of 18 lessons is not sufficient for them to progress further.
- In 2004/5 the proportion of Year 5 pupils who did not reach National Curriculum standards was much higher at 28%. This was because many of these pupils had learning difficulties and/or disabilities and faced barriers to learning in swimming. These pupils were not able to benefit from the PESSCL 'Top Up' funding in summer 2006 because the funding was not received in time to implement plans.
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe during swimming lessons. However, their recall of how to keep safe when near water outdoors is less secure with some pupils struggling to remember what they have been taught some time ago.
- With the support of staff from the school, around 16 pupils have achieved well in local galas and attend a local swimming club in their own time.
- A small number of gifted and talented pupils attend a local swimming club and are doing well, one representing the city in national competitions.
- Pupils enjoy swimming lessons. They enjoy the variety of activities and feel they are challenged. Levels of participation are good.

Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

- Swimming is taught by well qualified swimming teachers employed by BCSDU. They are supported by experienced class teachers and teaching assistants.
- Low Ash Primary School pupils benefit from the allocation of an extra swimming teacher provided through PESSCL 'Top Up' funding so that teaching groups are of a reasonable size.
- Physical skills are taught well so that pupils make good progress in developing water confidence, strokes and personal survival skills. Pupils of all abilities are suitably challenged.

- Behaviour and discipline are good.
- There is little planning to develop pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding across all strands of the National Curriculum or to use opportunities in swimming to develop key skills such as speaking and listening.
- Assessment is used satisfactorily to organise teaching groups of similar ability. BCSDU staff keep on-going records of individual pupils' achievements but these are only passed on to the school at the end of the programme of lessons. A clear record of each pupil's starting point in swimming is not kept.
- Class teachers and teaching assistants who attend swimming lessons are, at least, 'extra eyes' and are trained in this role by BCSDU staff. They are not all trained for or required to support learning in swimming.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory and supports pupils' progress.

- A programme of 18 lessons of 30 minutes per week enables most Year 5 pupils to achieve National Curriculum standards. However, this is not sufficient time for those pupils with little prior experience of swimming or those facing significant barriers to learning to reach National Curriculum standards.
- The school has benefited from additional swimming provision provided by BCSDU during this year and all Year 4 pupils have had a minimum of 10 lessons. They have made progress and been awarded school awards for their achievements. A small number of Year 6 pupils who did not reach National Curriculum standards during Year 5 also benefited from these sessions but have not yet met National Curriculum standards.
- The school encourages pupils to take part in swimming out of school hours.

Leadership and management

The leadership and management of swimming in the school are satisfactory.

- The leadership of the school and the subject leader, supported by staff in the school, are committed to supporting pupils in reaching National Curriculum expectations in swimming and to encouraging achievement of the more able swimmers.
- The school has made the most of opportunities for additional provision offered by BCSDU to provide additional experience for Year 4 pupils and a small number of current Year 6 pupils who did not achieve National Curriculum expectations.
- The school has a reasonable understanding of standards and the quality of provision in swimming though there is little formal

monitoring by leaders. An evaluation of the provision for Year 4 pupils showed the school to be satisfied with this provision.

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

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

- Year 5 pupils just starting their 18 week programme of swimming lessons are benefiting from the allocation of an extra swimming teacher provided by 'Top-Up' funding. The additional swimming teacher enables weak swimmers to work in a small group of 12 pupils with one swimming teacher and a class teacher.
- Year 4 pupils and a small number of Year 6 pupils who did not meet National Curriculum standards last year, also benefited from this arrangement during swimming lessons held in the first half of the school year.
- 'Top-Up' funding was not made available to the Partnership/BCSDU until autumn 2006 so that the 28% of Year 6 pupils from Low Ash School who had not reached National Curriculum standards and left the school in summer 2006 did not benefit from it.
- The policy of targeting funding towards weaker schools rather than to individual pupils within all schools has meant that 'Top-Up' funding has not been closely targeted towards all pupils for whom it was intended. Weak swimmers in some higher achieving schools have not yet benefited from 'Top-Up' arrangements.
- Plans are in hand for BCSDU to offer 'Top-Up' swimming opportunities to all pupils across the city, including pupils in Low Ash School, during two weeks of the summer term 2007. These sessions will be partly supported by 'Top-Up' funding.
- The impact of the PESSCL 'Top-Up' arrangements on standards and provision in swimming has not yet been evaluated by BCSDU or the partnership because swimming programmes in all schools have not yet been completed.

Inclusion

- The school takes good care to ensure that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have good opportunities to learn to swim. They liaise with families and support agencies to overcome barriers to learning.
- Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported during swimming lessons by the school's teaching assistants.
- The arrangements made to use 'Top-Up' funding have not always been targeted closely enough towards all pupils in need of support.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- ensure that all pupils, especially weaker swimmers, have sufficient time programmed for swimming lessons to enable them to meet National Curriculum standards
- ensure that arrangements for 'Top-Up' swimming are targeted to pupils not achieving NC standards in all schools
- remind pupils of how to keep themselves safe near water outdoors more frequently
- ensure that teachers and teaching assistants have sufficient training to enable them to be confident in supporting learning in swimming
- carry out more formal monitoring of provision and its impact on pupils' progress.

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

Gillian Salter-Smith
Additional Inspector