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Mr Alan Haigh  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Haigh

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 28 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 school staff and pupils and scrutiny of relevant documentation. On this visit it was not possible to observe any swimming lessons although time was allocated for a visit to the swimming facilities.

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

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in swimming are satisfactory.

- Within the school, there is a wide range of ability with some strong 'club' swimmers and some individuals who struggle with basic water confidence.
- In terms of the relative progress of different groups of pupils, there is no difference between boys or girls, pupils with physical disabilities, or between different ethnic groups.

## Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning in swimming is satisfactory.

- The teaching is undertaken by well qualified and experienced swimming instructors who are managed by the Specialist Sports College. The quality of the teaching is reflected in the satisfactory progress the vast majority of pupils make.
- The School Sports Coordinator is working with the class teachers to develop their knowledge and skills of supporting the teaching of swimming.
- Lessons are consistently planned, but pupils felt that they often work on whole group activities. This means that pupils are not working to individual learning outcomes, which extend opportunities provided for them to acquire, practice and refine their skills, knowledge and understanding of swimming working at their own level of ability. There is no system for monitoring the quality of teaching.
- Pupils respond well to the teachers but are not always clear about what they are intended to learn or what to do to improve.
- Teachers establish good working relationships with pupils. There are clear systems and procedures to ensure that pupils work in a safe environment. This builds on the rigorous safety procedures during travel and changing time at the leisure centre. Attendance and participation rates are good and most pupils report that they enjoy lessons.
- Attitudes to learning and standards of behaviour are good.
- Assessment practice is not fully in place. The pupils receive a baseline assessment at the beginning of the swimming programme and are grouped accordingly. However, the tracking of pupils' progress throughout the sessions is at this time inconsistent, although a system has recently started. This means that the school is unable to monitor achievement accurately at this time.

## Quality of curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory.

- The programme is well conceived and meets all requirements of the PE National Curriculum.
- The school has an allocation of one hour water time per week. This enables pupils to swim in alternate years through Key Stage 2.

Because of the numbers involved, pupils have 30 minutes water time each week.

- Provision is inclusive and access is open to all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and or disabilities. This is not supplemented by top up lessons. Schemes of work are suitable and curriculum mapping is appropriate.
- The school makes good use of the leisure centre pool, based at the local Specialist Sports and Arts College. It has exceptionally good facilities for the teaching of swimming to primary school pupils. There are good levels of learning aids and resources to support curriculum delivery.

## Leadership and management

Leadership and management are satisfactory.

- Leadership and management in relation to the provision of swimming within the school are satisfactory. You have a good understanding of the opportunities available through the programme. The school is well aware of its strengths and weaknesses in the provision for swimming. There are good links with the partners and an increasing understanding of what needs to be done to ensure that all pupils achieve as well as they can.
- Improvements are taking place but systems and procedures are not yet in place to monitor the quality of teaching and learning or the use data through rigorous analysis. This restricts progress within the swimming programme.
- All the respective policies and procedures relating to safeguarding children are satisfied.

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

- The PESSCL strategy is beginning to have an impact on improving the swimming standards attained by pupils. It ensures water time at a facility, which offers ideal resources to raise the standards of the schools swimming programme.
- The top-up programme is not in place to ensure that all pupils can swim the 25 metres requirements by the end of their time at school.
- The higher-teacher-to pupil ratios made possible by the top up funding is also beginning to have an impact on the quality of learning.

## Inclusion

- Teachers are supportive and this sets pupils at their ease and gives them confidence.
- There is good evidence that provision is equally accessible to all pupils at the school.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- rigorous monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning in order to raise standards
- continuing to develop the quality of assessment procedures and data analysis
- evaluate the review procedures to make sure best use is made of the PESSCL programme, including top up provision
- the schools knowledge of the percentage of pupils able to swim at least 25 metres.

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

Roger Whittaker  
Additional Inspector