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14 June 2007

Mrs Noon
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Noon

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 05 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 school staff and pupils, interviews with partnership link teacher (PLT), partnership development manager (PDM) and the school sports coordinator (SSCO) and scrutiny of relevant documentation. Five groups of pupils of different ability were observed during a swimming lesson.

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.
- The school recognises that some pupils are not achieving as well as they should and takes advantage of the 'Top Up' provision. The school appreciates the importance of this provision as it enables identified pupils to swim every day for a week. Some improvement is evident although the school still believes that groups of pupils, who do not participate regularly, are not learning as well as they could.
- 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. However, both pupils and teachers believe that group size and some teaching and learning, which does not meet the needs of individuals, is restricting achievement by pupils in the middle groups.

Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning in swimming is satisfactory.

- Well qualified and experienced swimming instructors, who are managed by the leisure centre, undertake the teaching. The quality of the teaching and learning does not always enable pupils to make progress at the level of which they are capable.
- 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 acquire, practice and refine their skills, knowledge and understanding of swimming working at their own level of ability. Many pupils, especially those in the middle groups felt that they spent too much time standing on the side of the pool. This view is supported by evidence gained during lesson observation.
- There is a system for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning but there is a need to review the process and to implement actions from the issues it raises. Closer communication with the school would support this process.
- 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.
- 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 inconsistent. This means that the school is unable to monitor achievement accurately.

Quality of curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory.

- The programme meets all requirements of the PE National Curriculum.
- The school has an allocation of 30 minutes water time per week for half a year for each year from Years 3 to 6. However, the large number of pupils means that there is a need for five ability groups. This causes some problems in a pool which has limited shallow water space and means that groups are often excessively large, especially for middle groups. The school has good systems for travel arrangements so that pupils do not lose water time.
- Provision is inclusive and access is open to all Year 3 to 6 pupils, including those with learning difficulties and or disabilities. This is enhanced by top up lessons. Schemes of work are suitable and curriculum mapping is appropriate.
- The school makes use of the relatively local leisure centre pool. Its facilities cause some difficulty for the number of pupils who still need shallow water. There are good levels of learning aids and resources to support curriculum delivery.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are satisfactory.

- You have a good understanding of the PESSCL programme and the opportunity it offers and are committed to ensuring that the pupils achieve as well as possible.
- Leadership and management in relation to the provision of swimming within the school are satisfactory. The school is well aware of its strengths and weaknesses in the provision for swimming. There are improving 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. However, the views of all partners are not always considered when reviewing procedures and practice.
- 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 which ensures that the school is able to monitor pupils' achievement. This restricts progress within the swimming programme.
- All the respective policies and procedures relating to safeguarding pupils 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 the local leisure centre.
- The top up programme is in place to ensure that all pupils have a better chance of achieving the 25m requirement 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. However, monitoring of teaching and learning and assessment procedures are not being developed sufficiently to ensure that achievement is improving enough. Lessons are boosting the water confidence of many pupils.

Inclusion

- Teachers are supportive and this sets pupils at their ease and gives them confidence.
- There is evidence that provision is equally accessible to all pupils at the school.
- The number of pupils in the middle groups and the varied quality of some teaching and learning is restricting the progress of some pupils.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- rigorous monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning in order to raise standards
- the number of pupils who achieve the required minimum distance of 25m
- the quality of assessment procedures and data analysis
- the review procedures to make sure that best use is being made of the PESSCL, using consultation with all partners.

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