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Mrs England
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs England

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Physical Education

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 12 June 2007 to look at work in Physical Education (PE).

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of PE, the visit had a particular focus on the continuity of learning between key stages.

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 staff and children, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of children's reports and observation of three lessons.

The overall effectiveness of PE was judged to be satisfactory.

Achievement and standards

Achievement in PE is satisfactory.

- Standards in PE are at expected levels in all key stages, and some older pupils reach standards which are above average particularly in games activities.

- The Foundation Stage profile records show that most children make satisfactory progress with a majority achieving the expected level in their physical development by the time they enter Year 1. Pupils continue to make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. The school believes that achievement is good for some pupils but this could not be substantiated as attainment and progress are not recorded.
- Pupils in the current Year 3 have regular swimming lessons and some manage to reach the national curriculum standard by the end of the year. There are, however, pupils in Key Stage 2 who are unable to swim or who do not reach the expected swimming standard before they leave. We discussed how the school might improve provision for these pupils.
- Pupils' personal development and well being are enhanced well by their involvement in PE and sport. Older pupils appreciate why exercise is important as part of a healthy lifestyle. In the lessons observed, pupils had positive attitudes and behaved well. We discussed how the school might extend pupils' opportunities for leadership and responsibility as Year 6 play leaders.

Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

- Three lessons were observed and the quality of teaching and learning ranged from satisfactory to outstanding. Teachers managed pupils well and all lessons followed a suitable structure. Learning objectives were made clear and demonstrations were used successfully to support teachers' explanations. Subject vocabulary was used effectively to enable pupils to increase their understanding. Pupils were given the chance to acquire, develop and apply their skills. Resources were used particularly effectively in the outstanding lesson to help pupils improve their performances and achieve well. In all the lessons teachers had high expectations and insisted on good behaviour.
- Teachers assess pupils' learning well in lessons through questioning and by observing their responses. However, these assessments do not contribute towards an accumulated record of pupils' attainment and progress. The end of year reports give parents only brief information on their child's achievements in PE and no indication of what they might do to improve.
- We discussed how teaching and learning might be improved by challenging pupils to achieve better quality outcomes, through sharper differentiation, and by using information and communication technology to support pupils' self evaluation and teachers' assessments.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory.

- All aspects of the National Curriculum are included and most pupils receive two hours of PE in their weekly timetable. The subject leader recognises that an imbalance currently exists in Key Stage 1 with insufficient time allocated to games activities. The introduction of schemes of work for gymnastics and dance has helped to strengthen teaching in these aspects of the curriculum. A particular highlight is the opportunity for pupils in Years 4 and 6 to take part in outdoor and adventurous activities. This is to be strengthened further by introducing orienteering challenges. Provision for outdoor play for Foundation Stage children has improved since the last inspection and is now adequate, although access is still restricted.
- The extra curricular programme provided for pupils is good. Many pupils participate in a range of activities led by school staff and visiting coaches. Playground facilities are very good. Play zones have been introduced and there is a varied range of play opportunities available, including a climbing wall and trim trail. The school enters, and has been successful in, a number of tournaments and competitions some of which are organised by the local PE, school sport and club links (PESSCL) partnership. Pupils' positive involvement in PE and sport has contributed towards the achievement of healthy school status.

Leadership and management

The quality of leadership and management in PE is satisfactory.

- Subject leadership is clearly focussed on improving provision. The subject leader makes a significant contribution to opportunities for pupils to take part in sports activities and competitions outside lesson time. He also looks for ways to enhance the curriculum by introducing new features, such as orienteering. A good range of well organised resources is available to support teaching and learning, and PE has a high profile in displays around the school.
- Leadership and management have been strengthened through the school's involvement in the PESSCL programme. The subject leader has used the primary link teacher training to improve his own subject knowledge. Other staff have attended courses and received support for improving their teaching in aspects of PE such as gymnastics and dance.
- The subject action plan is appropriately linked to the partnership development plan but is insufficiently focussed on how improvements will impact on outcomes for pupils. Monitoring and evaluation are currently underdeveloped with insufficient emphasis placed on keeping a check on the standards reached by pupils and on regularly observing and reporting on the quality of teaching and learning.

Subject issue – Continuity of learning between key stages

- Suitable emphasis is placed on children making a smooth transition from the Foundation Stage into Key Stage 1. Teachers recognise the importance of building on the early year's development of children's physical skills. Teachers in Reception and Year 1 meet to discuss learning programmes, and teachers' planning in Year 1 takes account of what pupils have achieved previously. The leadership team has recently adopted a more rigorous approach to analysing children's progress in the Foundation Stage.
- Transition from Key Stage 2 to 3 has improved during the school's involvement in the PESSCL programme. Pupils now have many more opportunities to visit the partner secondary school where they take part in festivals and tournaments. Year 5 pupils attend a sports taster day and Year 6 teachers provide secondary school staff with information on those pupils who are talented or who have additional needs. The school sports coordinator has also provided guidance and support for staff on teaching aspects of PE. Nevertheless, little emphasis has been placed on systematically developing curriculum continuity or discussing cross phase teaching and assessment approaches, although this is undertaken in other subjects. No formal record of pupils' achievements in PE is transferred from Year 6 to Year 7.

Inclusion

- All pupils are fully included in lessons. The promotion of healthy lifestyles and involvement in PE and sport are helping to improve pupils' lives.
- Pupils who are talented at sport are included on the school's gifted and talented register and they are encouraged to develop their particular strengths in local teams and clubs. Insufficient emphasis is placed in some lessons on challenging more able pupils to reach higher standards.
- More opportunities have been introduced for girls to be involved in sport and their participation in after school clubs has increased.
- Pupils with learning difficulties are given suitable support in lessons and additional programmes are provided for pupils with specific needs. Some teachers use 'brain gym' activities with their classes and the school is considering introducing the 'activate' programme to help improve concentration, motivation and coordination for all pupils.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- establishing a suitable system for assessing, recording and reporting pupils' achievements in PE
- strengthening leadership and management by undertaking more monitoring and evaluation and by keeping a close check on pupils' standards and achievement

- making more effective use of ICT to support teaching and learning.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop PE 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

Rob McKeown
Her Majesty's Inspector