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Mrs S Wilson
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Wilson

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Physical Education

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 11 June 2006 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 that will contribute to our national evaluation and reporting. Published reports are likely to list the names of the contributing institutions, but we will not identify individual institutions in the main text. We will publish all feedback letters 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 and observation of two parts of lessons. I also looked at facilities and sampled extra curricular activities.

The overall effectiveness of physical education was judged satisfactory, with some good features.

Achievement and standards

Standards attained in PE are average and pupils make satisfactory progress.

- Standards observed during the inspection are in line with those expected for children in Key Stage 1 dance and Key Stage 2 athletics. School assessment records reveal that standards in games, swimming,

gymnastics and outdoor and adventurous activities are also in line with national averages at Key Stage 1 and 2. The Foundation Stage profile indicates that children in Reception achieved the expected level for physical development by the time they entered Year 1. Standards observed in extra-curricular dance are above average, while they were broadly average in volleyball.

- Achievement is satisfactory. No differences were observed in the relative progress made by different groups of pupils at the school. Pupils make adequate progress in acquiring, developing and evaluating their skills in PE. Although they make good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding, their ability to select and apply appropriate skills and techniques is less well developed. They have a reasonable understanding of what happens to their bodies when they exercise and a developing awareness of why it is important to keep fit and healthy.
- Observations of pupils in dance show they can employ movement in an imaginative way. They can work at different levels and speeds and use a range of pathways. Pupils participating in athletics show they can employ running, jumping and throwing skills both independently and in combination. They co-operate well and are developing the ability to critically evaluate their own and others' performances.
- Pupils say that PE and sport at this school is great. They really enjoy the activities provided for them. In lessons, pupils receive some good opportunities to develop their confidence and self-esteem by working independently and as part of a team. At lunchtime, older pupils act as playground leaders, organising activities for younger pupils. This is promoting their personal development and leadership skills effectively. Attitudes to learning and the behaviour of pupils are also good, with high extra-curricular participation and attendance rates.

Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

- While the teaching observed had a number of good features, its impact on learning was satisfactory. Class teachers adapt their general teaching skills well to the demands of the subject. They are committed to improving their skills and have taken advantage of PE specific training courses. These have increased the confidence and competence with which they deliver the subject. Specialist coaches from the local authority teach all games activities.
- Teachers' planning and management of lessons is sound. They utilise a range of learning techniques to stimulate and inspire pupils to learn suitably. Staff make good use of warm ups to prepare the children for the activities to come. They provide pupils with frequent positive reinforcement, which adds to their confidence and willingness to try their best. Pupils are encouraged to achieve because staff have high expectations of them and set progressively challenging tasks.

- Staff provide pupils with appropriate levels of support and guidance and this helps them to learn satisfactorily. Teaching promotes purposeful and enjoyable learning and pupils respond enthusiastically to this. During lessons, pupils are given opportunities to assess and critically evaluate their own and others' progress, with guidance and support from teachers, although this process is not supported by clear success criteria.
- Less successful aspects of teaching included insufficient planning to meet different ability levels, and at times support staff are unclear about their specific role within the context of the lesson. Staff made no use of information and communication technology to enrich pupils' learning. On occasion staff did not give pupils sufficient time to consolidate their learning through practice and to refine the quality and precision of their movements and technique before moving them on to other activities. This affected the standards they were able to attain.
- Teachers are not trained in the teaching of games; currently this is undertaken by specialist coaches.
- Current assessment practice is satisfactory, with plans in place to improve the arrangements. At the end of a unit of work, teachers assess pupils using a traffic light system, which indicates whether a pupil has met, nearly met or is far from meeting expectations. This approach runs parallel with one adopted by the external coaches who deliver the games element of the curriculum. Pupils receive annual reports informed by these on-going assessments. However, neither approach includes initial assessment nor cross-moderation, which means the school, cannot accurately track pupils' progress from their starting points, and be entirely confident that judgements reached are consistent. Pupils are not aware of what they need to do to improve further in PE and have no input in evaluating their relative progress and setting future targets for improvement.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- Since the last inspection, the curriculum has been expanded to provide pupils with an excellent range of PE activities. Pupils benefit from two hours of PE including swimming and outdoor and adventurous activities in Key Stage 2. Curriculum planning has also improved since the last inspection, with good quality schemes of work now in place. These are clearly understood and consistently followed by all staff. Current provision is broad and balanced exceeding National Curriculum requirements by providing pupils with six activity areas.
- The school is working towards healthy schools accreditation and consequently pupils are actively encouraged to adopt healthy outlooks and participate in regular exercise. A number of the 'Every Child Matters' outcomes are promoted effectively through PE including, making a positive contribution and promoting healthy lifestyles. For example, at lunchtimes older pupils act responsibly as play leaders, organising activities for

younger pupils, and a salad bar has been introduced in the school dining hall to provide healthier meal options.

- A good range of extra-curricular activities complements the curriculum provision. Pupils benefit from committed school staff, local authority coaches, parents and staff from the local high school who provide clubs and out of school activities such as basketball, rugby, dance, cheerleading, netball, running and volleyball. The school's involvement in the School Sport Partnership Programme is benefiting all aspects of PE provision and has contributed to improvements in the breadth of curriculum provision, action planning and the quality assurance of provision. A number of training courses for staff, coaching sessions for pupils and festivals of sport have resulted from this collaboration and have enhanced opportunities for pupils to participate in high quality activities. It has also enabled staff to update and improve their own level of expertise in PE.
- The school has sufficient equipment and resources to support the curriculum it provides. Reception and Foundation stage pupils have dedicated play areas, while Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils have access to a number of hard court play areas and climbing equipment. The school also has its own field but this does not drain well, which means it is out of action for long periods during poor weather. The school hall is substantial and is suitable for all activities. The school makes use of off-site facilities such as the local high school and a local swimming pool.

Leadership and management of PE

The quality of leadership and management in PE is good.

- The new subject leader has successfully tackled PE issues identified at the last inspection. She has been supported well by the school's senior managers and representatives from the sport partnership and local Sports College
- The subject leader and school managers have good awareness of the strengths and weaknesses in provision and have developed a suitable action plan to address the latter. The impact of the subject leader has been far reaching. She has accessed relevant training and shared this with others; she has enabled staff to improve their subject expertise through professional development and has introduced a new scheme of work. She has brought clarity and organisation to the role and is beginning to monitor the effectiveness through quality assurance and self-assessment procedures to improve her own and others performance.
- Your support and guidance and the school's involvement in the sport partnership have been critical in securing improvements since the last inspection. The subject leader has the capacity to deliver further improvements. The full impact of new leadership and management in PE is not fully evident in the achievement of pupils at this time, but the effectiveness on provision is clearly good.

Subject issue – Continuity of learning between Key Stages

- The Foundation Stage profile is used to inform planning and to support continuity of learning between the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.
- At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils' achievement and attainment information is collated and shared with their new teachers in Key Stage 2 to inform their planning.
- Effective liaison between the subject leader and School Sport Coordinator from the local high school has initiated sharing of assessment information. Work has recently begun on aligning assessment procedures so that there is greater consistency between pupils' experiences at Key Stage 2 and 3. It is, however, too soon to judge the impact of these initiatives.

Inclusion

- The school's arrangements to promote inclusion through PE are satisfactory. All pupils including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are encouraged and supported to take an active role within lessons.
- Staff recognise that pupils learn in different ways and employ a range of learning approaches to engage and motivate them.
- In collaboration with the local authority, the school has worked effectively with a small number of disaffected boys using their interest in PE as a means of re-engaging them in the wider school curriculum.
- Similarly, talented and able pupils are identified and staff use extension approaches with these pupils. Pupils participating in extra curricular activities and those joining local clubs are able to develop their PE skills, knowledge and understanding further.
- Planning does not show evidence of meeting the needs of the least and most able pupils, although this was sometimes evident in practice. Teaching assistants are not always suitably deployed.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- developing a uniform assessment system, which allows the school to accurately record and track pupils' progress as they move through the school
- training school staff to deliver games activities
- deploying teaching assistants effectively and planning to meet the ability needs of all children
- ensuring all pupils are given sufficient opportunity to develop key skills and practise and refine their techniques
- improving the drainage of the school field so that all curriculum activities can be delivered in context.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop PE in the school.

As I explained in my previous letter, Ofsted will send a copy of this letter to your local authority and Ofsted will publish on its website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

John Young
Her Majesty's Inspector