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12 June 2007

Mrs A Hillier  
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Dear Mrs Hillier

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Physical Education

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 5 and 6 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 students' work and observation of six parts of lessons.

The overall effectiveness of PE was judged to be satisfactory with good features.

Achievement and standards

Achievement in PE is satisfactory in both key stages.

- Standards in Key Stage 3 are in line with national expectations overall; however there is considerable variation between groups. For example high jump technique in the accelerated Year 9 group was above average whereas the throwing and catching skills of Year 9 girls in rounders were low. Written work in PE GCSE was below expectations but in GCSE dance it was in line with expectations.

- The majority of pupils make satisfactory progress although most are capable of making more progress than at present. Achievement is generally better in games because there is more emphasis given to this during curriculum activities. Not enough use is made of pupils' prior learning to fully extend and challenge them.
- Pupils make satisfactory progress when they acquire, develop and apply skills. They have fewer opportunities to select skills and to observe and evaluate their own and others' work to bring about improvement.
- The majority of pupils behave well in lessons and display positive attitudes towards their learning. The vast majority of pupils work cooperatively in small groups and pairs. Boys are generally more engaged with their learning than girls. In one lesson, the behaviour of a small minority of boys was unsatisfactory and negatively affected the learning of others.
- Pupils have good opportunities to become junior sports leaders and Year 11 pupils have effectively used these skills when working with partner primary schools.
- Pupils say they enjoy PE and all appreciate the excellent range of facilities available on the school site.

### Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory with good features.

- Staff have good subject knowledge which, when used effectively, challenges pupils in their thinking and learning. However, intervention to improve pupils' work does not occur frequently enough or consistently across the department to enable all pupils to make the progress of which they are capable.
- A few teachers have good question and answer techniques that they use effectively to include all pupils in learning and to check pupils' understanding of tasks.
- Although teachers use a range of strategies, not enough opportunities are planned for pupils to identify and evaluate their own strengths and weaknesses and how they could improve their own work.
- Procedures for assessing pupils work are effective. National Curriculum levels of attainment are displayed close to changing areas. However few pupils understand what they have to do to improve their work.
- Pupils are taught in ability groups. Although this helps to support their progress, limited use is made of different tasks to better meet the needs of all pupils, especially higher attaining pupils. Occasionally pupils are given the opportunity to choose equipment that is appropriate to their skill level.

## Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory.

- The curriculum has an over-emphasis on games and does not give a balanced programme at both key stages. Teachers in the department have started to introduce more variety and choice at Key Stage 4, particularly with more individual and non competitive activities. However there are still limited opportunities for pupils to select aesthetic or creative activities.
- All pupils have the opportunity to achieve the expectation for two hours physical education during planned curriculum time, which is an improvement since the last inspection. However some time is lost when lessons do not begin punctually.
- A start has been made on revising units of work. The new format is much improved and makes good reference to using all elements of the PE National Curriculum and recognises stages of learning that enable pupils to consolidate their learning rather than planning weekly programmes of activity.
- A good programme of extra curricular and enrichment activities is offered to pupils. Sporting visits abroad are particularly popular and well supported.
- The PE and school sports partnership is starting to have a positive impact on the work of the department, especially in the opportunities for leadership by young people. The sports coordinator has very good awareness and understanding of how this will influence standards of Year 7 pupils when they enter the school. He has outstanding vision and drive for the future development of the programme.

## Leadership and management

The quality of leadership and management in PE is satisfactory with good features.

- You and your subject leader have accurate knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses in PE based on secure monitoring and evaluation activities; you have taken steps to tackle areas of weakness. The department action plan has clear goals although not enough emphasis is placed on improving the standards and achievement of all pupils.
- The subject leader has a clear vision for improvements but the pace of change has not been urgent enough; some of this work has been affected by instability of staffing within the department in the past couple of years.
- Documentation to support teaching and learning has improved with the revised units of work. However not enough use is made of assessment and tracking data with pupils to fully support their progress and helping them to understand their next step in learning.
- Good support has been given to new teachers including professional development opportunities.
- Good use is made of the excellent facilities.

## Subject issue – Continuity of learning between key stages

- Limited use is made of pupils' prior learning, although a baseline assessment is made for pupils when they join the school in Year 7.
- Not enough emphasis is placed on checking pupils' prior knowledge and understanding at the beginning of a unit of work to build on and extend existing skills.
- The department does not place enough emphasis on the technical side of PE in Key Stage 3 to help prepare pupils for the theoretical aspects if they choose GCSE accredited courses.

## Inclusion

- All pupils are fully engaged in PE lessons including those with learning difficulties and disabilities who make the same progress as others in the class.
- Boys tend to be more engaged in their learning than girls.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- reviewing the curriculum to better meet the needs of pupils, especially girls, and to ensure that all pupils make the progress of which they are capable
- making better and more extensive use of the assessment and tracking data with pupils so they all know what they have to do to improve their work
- making the most of opportunities to intervene and using more variety in teaching approaches to better support improvement in pupils' work
- find ways to share the good practice identified within the department.

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

Judith Rundle  
Her Majesty's Inspector