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15 October 2007

Mr Richard Hart
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Hart

Ofsted survey inspection programme – citizenship

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 10 and 11 October 2007 to look at work in citizenship.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the subject, the visit had a particular focus on provision for teaching and learning about Britain's diversity.

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 pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work, a visit to the inclusion centre and observation of seven lessons, an assembly and tutor time.

The overall effectiveness of citizenship was judged to be satisfactory.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are satisfactory.

- Pupils have a basic knowledge of parts of the citizenship curriculum, for example the role of the criminal system, globalisation and the work of parliament and government.
- Pupils have little understanding of the United Kingdom's relations with the European Union, the Commonwealth and the United Nations. Too little time is given to learning about these parts of the curriculum.
- Pupils carry out research into issues confidently and use websites sensibly to prepare summary notes. In science, for example, they probe

the ethical issues related to DNA. The English coursework related to crime and punishment is very worthwhile.

- Pupils are very good at considering other people's experiences. Many take on posts of responsibility in the school and some, sixth formers especially, contribute to the well-being of others in the community.
- The school council is effective because its views are taken seriously. Pupils were asked about the sort of rewards they like (postcards home) and discuss teaching styles with senior leaders.
- Pupils are enthusiastic and generous fund raising for charities.

Quality of teaching and learning of citizenship

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

- No citizenship lessons could be observed during the visit.
- Available evidence suggests that teaching is characterised by excellent relationships, very good concentration and behaviour, lively presentations, and interesting resources and content. Teachers use interactive whiteboards very effectively.
- Teachers do not show pupils how work is related to real life and wider issues often enough. In dance, for example, pupils did not know that the martial arts style they performed came from Brazil but had its roots in the slave trade.
- Pupils remember significant issues discussed in assemblies, for example the abolition of slavery and poverty in South Africa.
- Pupils learn the facts about topics but rarely note down the outcome of discussions, for example on the impact of drug misuse on society.
- Year 7 pupils responded thoughtfully to an excellent lesson discussing the lifestyles of pupils who are carers.

Quality of the curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory.

- Discrete citizenship lessons happen within the personal, social and health education programme. The schemes of work have been improved during the last academic year. However, with only one lesson per fortnight, there is too little time to cover all topics in depth, particularly those that are not discussed in other subjects.
- All subjects include citizenship elements in their schemes of work. For example Key Stage 4 pupils use data from local and national elections and charity surveys in statistics; in design technology, Year 7 pupils consider Fair Trade through a unit on Chocoholics. The curriculum has the potential to be good when these cross-curricular elements are delivered in full.
- Pupils study global warming, stewardship and recycling in religious education but the link with work in other subjects such as science or geography is not highlighted.
- In an innovative Key Stage 3, ICT project pupils evaluate and prepare presentations on social issues.
- Enrichment days (three in the past and five in 2008) contribute to pupils' appreciation of citizenship and particularly support their enquiry and

debating skills. However, as pupils will choose one option from a wide range in 2008, they will have very different experiences, some of which have tenuous links with citizenship.

- Assembly themes for the week are well planned and several have a strong focus on citizenship.

Leadership and management of citizenship

Leadership and management are good.

- You and your staff model many elements of good citizenship in the manner in which you work with pupils and their parents and how you ensure the school and local environment are cared for well.
- Senior leaders and the subject leader are fully aware of the strengths and weaknesses in the provision for citizenship, noting that a development target is to "Raise awareness of the citizenship profile across the school".
- Pupils do not know about or contribute to assessment of their progress. Reports do not meet statutory requirements.

Subject issue: teaching and learning about Britain's diversity

- Pupils have a sensitive and thoughtful awareness of the need for mutual respect and understanding of the diverse religious and ethnic identities in the United Kingdom.
- Religious education lessons include debate about ethnic groups and different faiths and the school population is harmonious.
- The school appreciates that it could do more to debate Britishness.

Inclusion

- The school personalises the curriculum so that, for example, high ability pupils take Year 9 tests a year early and those who do not wish to follow academic courses can study work-related options.
- Pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress in citizenship. All pupils study a vocational course in Years 10 and 11. Each includes important, but different, elements of citizenship. For example, visiting a hospice in health and social care and fund raising for an activity at an old people's home in business studies.
- The school provides over 40 after-school clubs and extended services, such as the community library. The school has numerous business and community links, particularly with the local primary school, and offers courses to local people. All of these benefit pupils and their parents and help them to feel part of the local community.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- increasing the amount of time for discrete citizenship lessons to enable full coverage of the National Curriculum programme of study
- encouraging teachers to show and discuss with pupils the links between work in all subjects and citizenship
- ensuring statutory assessment and reporting requirements are met.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop citizenship 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 the Ofsted website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Clare Gillies
Additional Inspector