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Mr Tomasevic  
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Dear Mr Tomasevic

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Physical Education

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 16 and 17 October to look at work in physical education (PE).

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the subject, 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 students, scrutiny of assessment data, departmental documents, and policies, analysis of students' work and observation of seven lessons, incorporating four of the six National Curriculum activity areas. I also observed students participating in extra curricular activities.

The overall effectiveness of PE was judged outstanding.

## Achievement and standards

Students' achievement is first class and the standards they reach are outstanding overall when set against their starting points, which are a little above average on entry to the school.

- Standards observed during the inspection were consistently above expected levels overall. Teacher assessment substantiates my view, and shows that more than 85% of students reach Level 5 or better by the end of Year 9, which is above the national average. At Key Stage 4 88% of students gained an A\*-C grade in GCSE PE, with 42% gaining an A\* or A grade. These figures are well above the national average. In addition, there was a 100% pass rate in the BTEC course, with 40% of students obtaining distinctions. Accredited courses in leadership also enjoy a 100% success rate.
- These outcomes represent fine progress by students, during their time in Key Stages 3 and 4. However, students do less well in theoretical aspects of external examinations.
- There is no major difference in the relative achievement of different groups of students, or in their achievement in the four strands of PE. The school has supported the development of a number of top class performers, and achieved success in regional and national competition.
- Students benefit from excellent personal development through PE, receiving high-quality support and guidance from staff. They are actively encouraged to develop confidence, independence, leadership qualities, and aspirations for the future. High quality outcomes for PE including striving to succeed, team working and developing evaluative skills are very apparent through provision. The school has gained the 'healthy schools gold' award, and students' awareness of the benefits of adopting healthy lifestyles is first-rate.
- In discussions, students reported a high satisfaction with PE. Staff nurture strong relationships with students. Attitudes to learning and behaviour are exemplary, while attendance and participation rates are superb. Students' achievements are recognised through a 'star' for the week, assemblies, and good referral system, alongside press coverage for outstanding performances.

## Quality of teaching and learning

In the number of lessons seen, the quality of teaching and learning was outstanding overall, and students made first class progress towards achieving lesson objectives.

- Students enjoy the expertise of 13 specialist PE teachers, whose planning is exemplary, and who skilfully facilitate the development of students' knowledge, skills, and understanding of PE. The challenging expectations of staff, a mutually supportive ethos amongst students,

coupled with high quality teaching further underpin students' success. During lesson observations, students were given some good opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills, as well as enhance their PE vocabulary.

- Many lessons observed embodied the excellence and enjoyment that students can achieve through PE. Ideal learning environments, use of appropriate technology, tailored learning approaches, and a keen focus on developing the four strands of PE ensured students often made exceptional progress. Students received great opportunities to practice and refine their skills during lessons, whilst also exploring the theoretical rationale and mechanics of the skill. Students further honed their understanding of tactics and strategy when staff required them to apply their new skills in a 'real-life scenario'.
- The quality and effectiveness of assessment procedures is outstanding. Good quality data about attainment on entry, together with frequent assessment provides the department with information that it uses effectively to inform planning, and tailor provision. The department has developed an excellent monitoring and evaluation system, which tracks individual student's progress.
- This database is regularly updated and identifies, through a rating system, those students meeting expectations, exceeding expectations, and those underperforming, at which point additional support is provided to get students 'back on track'. The system is transparent and well embedded throughout the school.
- Students know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve further, and are involved in commenting on staff perceptions of their attainment and progress. The school maintains assessment records for all students, including non-GCSE and BTEC students in Key Stage 4.
- Parents receive a progress report each term and benefit from formal 'face to face' consultations with staff.
- Staff do not always take the opportunities presented to make connections across subjects.

## Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is outstanding.

- There is excellent overall breadth and balance to the curriculum, with students able to experience all six areas of the National Curriculum, including an outdoor and adventurous residential experience for all Year 8 students. The time dedicated to PE is very good - each student is entitled to three hours of timetabled PE, which is above average, particularly at Key Stage 4.
- Students are grouped by ability and follow tailored curricula that aim to maximise their learning and achievement. Movement between groups is fluid, and monitored by an on-going assessment of student suitability and progress.

- Students taking accredited awards in leadership, first aid, coaching, BTEC and GCSE enjoy additional time. By introducing academic and vocational courses at Key Stage 4, the department has maximised the appeal of the subject and is meeting the needs and interests of students.
- An impressive array of extra curricular provision is also offered to students, including non-traditional activities such as archery, rowing and skiing. Alongside this, students can opt for volunteering schemes, through the schools involvement in the 'Step into Sport' programme.
- Talented students join the 'Junior Athlete Education' programme and benefit from additional support and guidance to further their sporting ambitions. There is an on-site Dance academy and the school are looking to branch out and establish a 'sports academy'. Good use is made of outside coaches and teachers to enrich students' experience of PE and sport.
- The quality of PE accommodation and equipment is enviable, and allow staff to deliver a very broad range of activities. A swimming pool, two all-weather astro-turf pitches, dance studio, sports hall, fitness suite, and extensive pitches, are just some of the resources available to staff.

## Leadership and management of PE

Leadership and management of PE are outstanding.

- The joint heads of PE are highly effective, using their complementary skills to good effect to promote high quality PE across the school. A group of talented and committed colleagues, who collectively form an outstanding team of PE professionals, ably supports them. There is a strong emphasis upon maintaining high standards and equality of opportunity.
- Exemplary management systems and structures exist to facilitate the smooth operation of the department. Roles and responsibilities are clearly established, and efficiently undertaken. As a result of detailed schemes of work, a comprehensive induction programme, thorough curriculum planning, clear policies and operating procedures, all staff including newly qualified teachers, trainee teachers and support staff receive effective support and guidance in the department.
- Managers have a good awareness of strengths and weaknesses of PE provision. Resources are deployed effectively to drive up standards and improve outcomes for students. Quality assurance of teaching and learning, moderation of assessment, regular meetings to share best practice, and inset for staff maintain a consistency of quality.
- Despite the success already achieved, leaders have not become complacent, and regularly re-examine current practice to identify areas for improvement. Action plans are in place, and annual reviews highlight good progress against previously identified targets and

issues. Based on their impressive track record and impact on student outcomes, the capacity for further improvement is excellent.

#### Subject issue- Continuity of learning between key stages

- The school works closely with partner feeder schools to promote excellent continuity of learning between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3. A fundamental emphasis is placed on supporting primary school teachers to improve the quality of PE teaching and learning, and developing pupils' core movement skills before they transfer to Toot Hill.
- Staff from Toot Hill liaise successfully with partner primary school staff to develop bridging units of work, strengthen assessment arrangements, and align curriculum provision. In addition, partner feeder school primary staff have accessed training, and benefited from use of the school's facilities and resources.
- Talented pupils have been identified and given additional opportunities to develop their skills. Above all close collaboration has aided planning and smoothed the transition process.
- Work undertaken as part of the sport partnership has enabled students from partner feeder schools to access a wider range of activities, including festivals of sport and specialist coaching.

#### Inclusion

- Good arrangements are in place to promote inclusion in the department. All pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities take a full and active part in PE alongside their peers. Adapted equipment, prompt sheets, differentiated activities, and setting arrangements are routinely used.
- Older experienced students and classroom learning assistants are deployed effectively to further support students. Big lottery funding has enabled the school to establish a programme, run by Year 12 sports leaders, for identified Year 6 pupils called the 'happy hour club'. This club sets out to raise students' self-esteem and break down potential barriers to participation. An 'extreme sports' inclusion club has been set up to appeal to a wider audience, and a range of outside coaches support non-traditional activities such as in-line skating, snowboarding, martial arts, kayaking and break-dancing. The school also support a bursary scheme for gifted and talented students.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- continue to improve achievement in the theory component of GCSE PE
- using PE to develop the connections between subjects like English, science, and mathematics.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop Physical Education 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

John Young  
Her Majesty's Inspector