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Mrs Benford  
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Dear Mrs Benford

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Physical Education

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 03 December 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: discussions with staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' reports and observation of two lessons, and two 'take 10' sessions. I also observed play leaders working with children at lunchtime.

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

Achievement and standards

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory when set against their starting points, which are satisfactory on entry to the school.

- Standards observed during the visit were broadly satisfactory. All pupils make satisfactory and sometimes good progress towards individual lesson objectives. However, their achievement in the four strands of PE

was not consistent. Pupils were better at demonstrating their knowledge and understanding of fitness and health, but less adept at acquiring and developing skills or selecting and applying these skills successfully in context.

- Pupils' personal development through PE is good. Staff assume a nurturing approach, which pupils respond to with good behaviour and a willingness to learn. Pupils readily admit they 'love PE'. Participation rates are high; pupils collaborate very well, and act responsibly when asked to work independently. There are good leadership opportunities for older pupils through the play leader scheme.
- Pupils understand, and adhere to health and safety guidance and have a good awareness of the benefits of following healthy lifestyles. The school has gained the Healthy Schools Gold Award, and the Activemark Silver Award in recognition of its work in this area.

### Quality of teaching and learning

In the small number of lessons seen, the quality of teaching and learning was satisfactory overall, with some good teaching.

- Staff work very hard to help pupils secure gains in their skills, knowledge, and understanding of PE. The training staff have undergone has increased their knowledge and understanding, and boosted the competence and confidence with which they deliver the subject.
- Positive reinforcement and meticulous planning are commonplace, though not always consistently applied, and this can lead to some discrepancy in the quality of feedback, and the suitability of challenges provided for pupils. Using varied teaching approaches helps staff to tailor their teaching to the needs of individual pupils who respond particularly well when they were given open-ended challenges and some autonomy.
- No formal assessments or tracking procedures exist. This lack of records means it is difficult for staff to substantiate their view that pupils' standards and achievement are above average. One member of staff is trialling the use of core tasks as a way of gauging pupils' achievement in relation to the National Curriculum Attainment Targets, with some success. A traffic light based self-assessment system was also trialled during the inspection. There is no target setting and most pupils do not have a clear idea of how well they were doing, or what they need to do to improve further.
- A less successful aspect of teaching and learning included the time it took for pupils to settle down when requested to by the teacher.

### Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good, with excellent elements. It is wide-ranging, balanced, and offers good extra curricular opportunities.

- During their time in the school, pupils experience each of the six activity areas of the PE National Curriculum. Pupils receive a minimum of two hours PE a week. In addition, there is a well-constructed daily 10-minute PE themed session, which all pupils participate in enthusiastically. Pupils take advantage of an excellent and diverse extra curricular programme, and benefit from a residential experience to Castleton, which features a range of outdoor and adventurous activities. A play leader and senior pupils facilitate structured games activities at lunchtime, which are very popular.
- The schools involvement with the School Sport Partnership Programme enables pupils to benefit from festivals of sport, multi-skills coaching, and access to a range of resources. Staff have benefited from excellent training, networking, curriculum, and management development opportunities, which has improved their ability to deliver the subject successfully. Some good links exist with local and professional clubs who provide coaching to pupils.
- The school has a good range of PE facilities, equipment and resources, although the fields drain poorly, and are often out of use during the autumn term. The school also makes good use of a local swimming pool and sports centre.

#### Leadership and management of PE

Leadership and management of PE are satisfactory, with good features.

- The subject leader is hard working and has good planning skills. There is a general focus on raising pupil standards and achievement, through effective teaching and learning and a suitable curriculum, but no specific strategy for using assessment to boost learning and achievement.
- Staff deploy available resources and equipment well. Suitable programmes of study and appropriate health and safety protocols are in place. Staff receive training to improve their knowledge and understanding of PE, and good practice is disseminated during regular meetings.
- Self-evaluation is largely accurate, and the subject leader is aware of most weaknesses in provision. She monitors teachers' planning and their end of year evaluations of pupils, but does not monitor the quality of teaching and learning. Senior management have not monitored the quality of teaching and learning in PE either. Assessment procedures are under-developed and leave staff exposed when evaluating pupils' achievement and standards.
- The capacity for further improvement is good, given the enhancements secured to the curriculum, transition arrangements, teachers' knowledge and understanding of PE and pupils' personal development and well-being.

Subject issue- Continuity of learning between key stages

- Effective arrangements exist to promote continuity of learning, with staff from Key Stages 1 and 2 regularly meeting to share pupil information. Key Stage 2 and 3 staff liaise by joint working on bridging units, curriculum development, and training for primary school staff.
- Festivals of sport, gifted and talented camps and multi-skills coaching, provide further opportunities for some of the high school staff to familiarise themselves with the Key Stage 2 pupils.

Inclusion

- Suitable arrangements exist to promote inclusion in PE. Support staff work effectively with targeted pupils, and staff use a range of teaching strategies to make the curriculum accessible to all pupils. Planning to meet the needs of different pupils was evident, although staff did not always apply it in practice. A gifted and talented audit has taken place and a register established.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- devising a system to assess, record and report pupil progress
- monitoring the quality of teaching and learning.

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