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Mr Charles Lowry  
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Dear Mr Lowry

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Physical Education

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 14 and 15 November 2007 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 learners, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of eight lessons.

The overall effectiveness of physical education was judged to be outstanding.

Achievement and standards

Achievement in PE is outstanding.

- GCSE results are well above average. Pupils achieve better results in GCSE PE than in their other subjects. The proportion of pupils reaching the highest grades is significantly above the national average. Boys achieve particularly well.
- Attainment when pupils start in Year 7 is in line with expectations for their age. They make very good progress throughout the school.

- Pupils acquire and develop skills at a very good rate and are very confident in evaluating each other's performances. They have very good understanding of how to maintain fitness and health and how to warm up safely.
- Individuals and teams are successful in local, county and sometimes national competitions in football, rugby, netball, athletics, tennis, cross-country running and boccia.
- PE makes an outstanding contribution to pupils' personal development. Many pupils develop confidence in taking on leadership roles within lessons and other activities. They take on a mature role in contributing to decisions about curriculum and extra-curricular activities through the pupils' sports councils.
- Pupils have excellent attitudes towards PE, sport and activity. Pupils are highly committed to improving their performance and many take part in the wide range of extra-curricular activities, showing commitment to teams and competitive sport.
- Relationships between pupils and staff are very positive and pupils' behaviour is outstanding.

### Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning are outstanding.

- Teachers have very high expectations of pupils' conduct, learning and progress.
- Teachers' expertise is evident in the very well planned and structured lessons that result in rapid learning and high levels of physical activity.
- Pupils' progress is assessed from the very start. This information is used to make sure that tasks and activities are well matched to pupils' needs. Consequently, all pupils are fully challenged.
- Pupils are fully involved in evaluating their own and each other's performances. Teachers make sure that the criteria for assessing performance are very clear.
- GCSE pupils have challenging targets. They know how well they are doing and what they must concentrate on to improve in both practical and theory work.
- Teachers' questioning is challenging and ensures that pupils think out problems for themselves.
- Systems for recording pupils' progress do not track progress in all strands of the PE National Curriculum.
- The department is in the process of developing the use of information and communications technology (ICT) to support more fully learning in practical work and theory.

### Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- The curriculum successfully promotes enjoyment and high levels of achievement in PE and sport. A wide range of activities is provided in lesson time meeting pupils' needs and interests well.

- The curriculum in Key Stage 3 prepares pupils very well for GCSE and leadership awards.
- The range of extra-curricular activities is outstanding and provides a high number of pupils, including those with physical difficulties and/or disabilities, with opportunities to succeed.
- The vast majority of pupils in Key Stage 3 have access to two hours of high quality PE. In Key Stage 4, this is the case for only around one third of pupils. The proportion is increasing as the range of extra-curricular activities is broadened further.
- GCSE PE is offered but GCSE Dance is not offered as a separate accreditation. The department has introduced the Young Leaders Award for students at Key Stage 4 as part of its vocational provision.

## Leadership and management

Leadership and management of the subject are outstanding.

- The head of department sets very high expectations of staff and pupils.
- A very strong team of staff is fully committed to maintaining high standards and improving provision.
- The school's commitment to high quality PE is evident in the recent improvements made to facilities and its determined pursuit of much needed grassed playing areas.
- The senior leaders and department members have an accurate view of the effectiveness of the subject, based on secure systems of monitoring performance and consultation with pupils and staff.
- The department action plan sets out the right priorities and serves to guide improvements well.
- The recent improvements made to systems of assessment, the development of pupils' involvement in evaluating performance and the broadening of the curriculum demonstrate a very strong capacity to improve.
- Staff pay good regard to health and safety guidelines on a day-to-day basis. Formal risk assessment of all working areas and activities is not fully complete.

## Subject issue

- Primary school pupils take part in many sporting activities organised by the school sport co-ordinator (SSCo) so that they get to know staff, pupils and the school site before they start.
- The work of the SSSCo and other coaches in primary schools is helping to raise pupils' standards. The baseline assessment of Year 6 pupils carried out by the SSSCo has been used by staff in the secondary school to ensure that high expectations are set from the very start in Year 7.
- Schemes of work from Year 7 to Year 11 and continuous assessment support very good continuity of learning. The attention paid to developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of health and fitness, skills of analysis and evaluation of performance and leadership from Year 7 through to Year 11, is a particularly strong feature.

- Pupils are well informed of the courses and pathways they may take when they move on to post-16 education. They are aware of sport related career opportunities.

## Inclusion

The school is a designated school for pupils with physical disabilities.

- Pupils with physical disabilities are fully included in PE. Tasks and activities are carefully adapted to suit individual needs. Pupils enjoy lessons and take part in a good range of extra-curricular activities.
- Pupils with physical difficulties and/or disabilities achieve success in sport. The Boccia team is successful in local competitions and many pupils did well in the Greater Manchester Youth Games.
- Gifted and talented pupils are identified and are very well provided for in lessons, through extra-curricular provision and links with local sports clubs.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- increasing the proportion of pupils experiencing at least two hours of high quality PE in Key Stage 4
- developing systems of recording pupils' progress to cover all strands of the PE National Curriculum
- completing formal risk assessments for all working areas and activities.

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 the Ofsted website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Gillian Salter-Smith  
Additional Inspector