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Mr N Shopland
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Dear Mr Shopland

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Personal, Social and health Education (PSHE)

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 28 and 29 January 2008 to look at work in PSHE.

As well as looking at key areas of the subject, the visit had a particular focus on:

- how the PSHE curriculum meets the specific needs of pupils in your local area, and how progress is tracked and assessed; and
- the contribution made by PSHE to the future economic well-being of your pupils.

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 pupils, staff and the chair of governors, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of two lessons.

The overall effectiveness of PSHE was judged to be good.

Achievement

Achievement in PSHE is good.

- Pupils enjoy PSHE activities and have positive attitudes towards the subject. They value the regular 'check in' and 'check out' sessions

during the week because this gives them the chance to 'find out more about each other'.

- They have a good understanding of how to work in teams because of the emphasis given by teachers to develop their creative skills through a series of 'challenges'.
- Pupils learn to listen to others' ideas, make suggestions and compromise if necessary. They have a good understanding of how to share roles, tasks and responsibilities.
- Pupils know how important it is to keep healthy and value the swimming sessions, the many residential trips and the after school sports clubs.
- Older pupils have a sound knowledge of the dangers of alcohol and smoking.

Quality of teaching and learning in PSHE

The quality of PSHE teaching is good.

- Teachers have good subject knowledge as a result of professional development in PSHE related activities.
- Their work on negotiating success criteria with pupils and developing team skills is outstanding.
- Planning is comprehensive and sets out a range of activities which focus specifically on the development of pupils' personal and social skills.
- Effective use is made of the expertise of teaching assistants to assess and record the outcomes of activities. The teaching assistants also lead sessions well.
- Assessment includes regular opportunities for pupils to assess their own and their peers' progress. In the 'challenge' lessons they collectively tackle a 'team self assessment' question.
- Teachers report to parents in detail on the social skills pupils develop over time.
- Pupils feel safe and secure in the school environment.

Quality of the curriculum

The curriculum is good.

- It is enhanced by the use of strategies to develop pupils' critical thinking skills where they look at things from different points of view and talk about different ways to do something, often for other children.
- The Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) materials are used to provide an interesting range of activities.
- PSHE lessons routinely provide a good level of challenge by asking pupils to direct others and follow the direction of others.
- Teachers assess pupils' progress and use video and photographic evidence well to record and evaluate learning.
- Work is ongoing to achieve the healthy school award.

Leadership and management of PSHE

The leadership and management of PSHE are good.

- The senior management team has improved PSHE through the introduction of important whole school initiatives. The subject co-ordinator is relatively new to her management role but is clear about how to drive the subject forward.
- Access to continuing professional development is good and all staff has received guidance on the PSHE curriculum, and its assessment, as well as useful training on SEAL and the critical thinking skills programme.

Subject issues: How well are pupils prepared for the future economic well being of your pupils?

- Pupils are well prepared for the next steps in their lives. They take responsibility and are encouraged to use their initiative. They are representatives on the school council and in this role they are looking at how the dining area can be made a more attractive environment and how parking can be improved for the school's neighbours. Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 are playground leaders following a rigorous application and interview process. Pupils are involved in staff recruitment which involves them well in the life and work of the school.

Inclusion

Inclusion is good.

- The school meets the needs of pupils by identifying them and providing additional help where necessary.
- Pupils' views are listened to by school leaders.
- They negotiate success criteria in the 'challenge' activities.
- Through their regular 'challenge' lessons even the youngest pupils are aware of how to overcome barriers to their learning.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- achieve the healthy schools award by completing the necessary audit of provision.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop PSHE 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

Henry Moreton
Additional Inspector