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13 March 2008

Mr Wright
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Wright

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 Monday 03 March 2008 to look at work in PSHE. Please pass on my thanks to your colleagues for all their time and support.

As outlined in my initial letter, 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 you, the assistant headteacher and the subject leader for PSHE, scrutiny of relevant documentation, discussion with three groups of pupils, observation of two lessons and an assembly.

The overall effectiveness of PSHE was judged to be satisfactory.

Achievement in PSHE

Achievement in PSHE is variable across the school, better at Key Stage 3 than at Key Stage 4, but satisfactory overall.

- Although students develop good personal and social skills, aspects of emotion well-being, for example learning to empathise with each other, is under-developed at both key stages.
- The individual personal and social skills support for identified pupils is good. It improves their skills in this area and has had a tangible impact on improving their ability to cope, function and achieve in school.
- Students have insufficient knowledge of sex and drugs education, especially alcohol and relationships education at Key Stage 4.
- Insufficient curriculum time allocation for PSHE has constrained student achievement.

Quality of teaching and learning in PSHE

- It was not possible to see any PSHE lessons during the visit, but two lessons observed containing aspects of PSHE were judged only satisfactory as the learning objectives for the lessons lacked sufficient clarity and focus.
- Students report that too much of the learning on the PSHE days is work-sheet based.
- There is currently no formalised framework for the assessment of PSHE.

Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the PSHE curriculum is inadequate overall.

- There is currently insufficient curriculum time allocated to PSHE to ensure full delivery of the curriculum. For example, there is not enough time for careers education, emotional well-being and the impact of alcohol as part of drugs education, especially at Key Stage 4.
- Some PSHE days do not provide sufficient opportunities for students to explore issues in depth, through discussion and role play. Others are more successful, such as the recent Politics Awareness day.

Leadership and management of PSHE

The leadership and management of PSHE are satisfactory with a clear capacity to improve.

- There have been some positive developments in PSHE since the whole school inspection in June 2006, such as the clear management structure for PSHE now in place and the introduction of some focused PSHE days involving all staff.
- The conscientious subject leader has designed a wide range of resources for staff to use on PSHE days. However in this small school, he has too many other teaching commitments to focus sufficiently on further developments in PSHE.
- Plans are in place to introduce the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning materials.

- There are insufficient opportunities for the continuing professional development of staff in PSHE.
- The quality and impact of PSHE delivery are not monitored rigorously.

Subject issue: The contribution of PSHE to the future economic well-being of your pupils.

Students are generally well prepared for their adult lives. Students are confident, articulate young people who work well together in lessons. Enterprise days are also planned into the curriculum.

Inclusion

Inclusion is good. Vulnerable students are well supported in their specific needs, gain tremendous confidence and self-esteem through individual staff support and the use of an external charitable counselling group. The school-based 'Zone' also supports individuals in need of extra support well in developing their learning, personal and social skills.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- increasing the time allocated to PSHE on the curriculum to ensure better coverage
- devising a framework for assessment in PSHE to ensure that all pupils' progress is tracked
- ensuring that all staff teaching PSHE have the appropriate training and expertise.

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

Clive Kempton
Her Majesty's Inspector