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Dear Mr Pierzchalla

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Physical Education

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 06 and 07 February 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 assessing the PE contribution to the outcomes of Every Child Matters, particularly being healthy.

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 students' work and observation of five lessons.

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

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in PE are good.

- By the end of Key Stage 2 a high proportion of students reach standards that are above the national expectation. Achievement is good because the majority of students make better progress than normal over the first two years in school. Baseline data shows that the progress made by lower achievers is especially good.
- For boys, the good progress made in Key Stage 2 continues into Key Stage 3. By Year 8 standards are already in line with the national expectation for the end of the key stage. The rate of progress for girls slows in Key Stage 3 and standards in Year 8 are broadly in line with

the national expectation. A minority of students achieve standards above this level.

- By Year 8 almost all students have good knowledge and understanding of the benefits of regular exercise and healthy eating. A considerable number of girls achieve standards above the expectation in gymnastics because they enrich their curriculum work by attending local clubs and extra-curricular classes in school.
- In the work seen, Year 6 students were able to throw, pass and catch balls confidently. They could evaluate the performance of others and provide perceptive comments on how to improve. Boys' skill levels in hockey are well above average. They push, trap and tackle for the ball with good stick control and apply simple strategies to outwit opponents in small-sided games. Performances in Year 5 dance were much less confident. Actions in response to a chosen theme were of uneven quality and students had very limited knowledge of the correct technical vocabulary.
- Four fifths of Year 5 students meet the National Curriculum expectation to be able to swim at least 25 metres using a recognised stroke.
- Students' attitudes and commitment to PE are outstanding. They enjoy the subject and this is reflected in the high levels of participation in lessons and in extra-curricular activities. They listen attentively and are keen to make contributions when asked.

Quality of teaching and learning of PE

The quality of teaching is satisfactory with some good features.

- Very good relationships between staff and students and teachers' high expectations ensure a positive ethos for learning.
- The high standards in performance of 'core' skills can largely be attributed to the continuity in learning provided through regular contact with the same teacher. Very secure coaching knowledge allows the teacher to 'pin-point' where changes need to be made to correct and refine technique. This builds high self-esteem in students because they can see the progress they make.
- Familiarity with routines, lively and engaging instruction, very good organisation and effective use of resources collectively help students achieve learning outcomes.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) is used efficiently to track progress against National Curriculum levels and most students understand what is required of them to reach the next level in learning. However, the school requirement to measure, record and report progress for PE and games as separate subjects is confusing and leads to misconceptions about what constitutes PE itself.
- Sometimes teachers talk for too long, causing students to be inactive for long periods.
- Often students are simply recipients of the coaching offered in lessons. There are very few occasions when they can contribute their own ideas or for their ideas to be used to deepen knowledge and understanding.
- Short-term planning is variable. Learning objectives are often too broad or describe what the students will do rather than what they will learn.

- The high turnover of female teachers has led to discontinuity and inconsistency in learning in some activity areas.

Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- Students across both Key Stages receive two hours of curriculum PE. A very high proportion benefit enormously from regular participation in an excellent range of extra curricular activities.
- The curriculum is broad and makes provision in Year 8 for students to gain the Young Leaders Award. However, units of work are too short to cover the full programme of study because too many games activities are covered each year.
- The school has well established links with outside clubs in canoeing and tennis. Increasingly the PE, School Sport and Club Links (PESSCL) strategy is opening up new links with clubs and promoting an even wider range of activities in the extra-curricular programme.
- Excellent use is made of the sporting interests of other members of staff to lead clubs. For example, in football, rugby and gymnastics.
- The residential experiences provided in each key stage are very much appreciated by students.
- Students say they would like to be able to use small equipment for informal physical activity during the lunch break.

Leadership and management of PE

The quality of leadership and management in PE is good.

- The head of department is committed to improvement and energetically pursues this goal. His determination and dedication has created the culture for involvement in physical activity that permeates the school.
- The subject self evaluation form is an accurate assessment of present strengths and weaknesses. There is a clear view of what needs to be done to further improve provision although the information is not available in a subject development plan.
- Clear policies and good communication ensures day-to-day organisation runs smoothly but monitoring and evaluation is not sufficiently rigorous to identify some weakness in teaching and learning.
- The School Sport Partnership, although relatively new, has helped the department keep pace with recent changes and innovations in PE.

Subject issue - PE contribution to the outcomes of Every Child Matters particularly being healthy

PE makes a significant contribution to the outcomes of Every Child Matters (ECM).

- The school uses helpful guidance produced by The Stafford and Stone School Sports Partnership (SSP) on how to meet the ECM criteria through physical activity.
- There is a very strong commitment to physical activity and health in and beyond the school. This is demonstrated by the wide range of extra-curricular sports available, excellent links with clubs in the wider community and the healthy eating choices available at break and lunchtimes.
- In Year 8 there is a discrete unit of work to improve students' knowledge and understanding of health and fitness. At this age they can also engage in decision making and volunteering by gaining accreditation in the Young Leader Award.
- The students say they enjoy PE and that they can take part safely.

Equality and diversity

- All students, including those with learning difficulties, are fully included in the curriculum and receive equal access and entitlement to the PE programme of study.
- New resources such as 'dance mats' and indoor rowing machines are helping to engage students that have not previously involved themselves in physical activity during their free time.
- Strong emphasis is placed on students collaborating during PE lessons.
- Assessment of learning is not regularly used to provide differentiated tasks in lessons. In particular, the level of challenge for the most able students is often too low.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- more regular and rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning with priorities for action included in a subject development plan
- providing more opportunities for students to contribute and use their own ideas in lessons
- providing better balance in the curriculum by increasing the time available to deliver each unit of work
- removing the requirement to assess, record and report progress separately as games and PE
- planning lessons to include tasks that are better matched to the wide ability levels in each class.

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

I Howard Todd
Additional Inspector