

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404040
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



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Mr A May
Headteacher
Emerson Park School
Wych Elm Road
Hornchurch
RM11 3AD

Dear Mr May

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 19 and 20 March to look at work in PSHE.

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 wellbeing 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 yourself, your senior leadership team, students from Years 9 and 11, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of students' work and observation of 5 lessons, an assembly and a form time.

The overall effectiveness of PSHE was judged to be good.

Achievement

Achievement in PSHE is good.

- Students value their lessons in PSHE.
- Students are confident, forthright and honest. They readily express their views, listen to others and disagree politely.

- Students' knowledge of how to stay healthy is good.
- Students have a good understanding of sex education issues.
- They are well prepared for their future adult lives, work together well and enjoy being actively involved in lessons and life at school.
- Students' financial capability and their knowledge of stress and emotional health issues are less well developed than other aspects of PSHE.

Quality of teaching and learning in PSHE

The quality of PSHE teaching is good.

- Relationships between teachers and students are good and teachers manage their students well. Teachers are approachable and want students to be involved in lessons and the life of the school.
- The resources they use are well planned and interesting.
- Most lessons move at a brisk pace and teachers are mostly confident in the subject.
- Generally teachers use open questions that challenge and stimulate students' understanding.
- Teachers communicate well with students, explaining clearly and using demonstrations when appropriate.
- A few teachers are less confident in the use of suitable teaching strategies, so their lessons are less active and sometimes limit the development of students' skills.
- At times, the work set does not fully challenge the more able students or is too easy for those of lower ability.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) is being used at times, but it needs more use to help students learn PSHE.
- Assessment is being developed and there are some good examples in use. However, they do not yet provide enough information for students to know how well they are doing and how to improve their work in PSHE.

Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- The PSHE programme is broad and well-planned.
- The schemes of work are comprehensive and prescribe active approaches for teaching.
- In Key Stage 3, there is a strong, discrete programme of PSHE; while in Key Stage 4, it is carefully integrated in topics, together with citizenship.
- Careers education and enterprise activities are well represented and ensure students are well prepared for the world of work.
- Form time is used well to help develop students' understanding of PSHE.
- The curriculum is enriched well by the use of a wide range of visitors.
- Other subjects make a good contribution to PSHE, but the links are not yet formalised or fully audited.

- The areas of financial capability and emotional literacy are not fully represented but are being developed.

Leadership and management of PSHE

- The leadership and management of PSHE are good.
- The subject co-ordinator is experienced and knowledgeable. She is committed, enthusiastic and is used to support local schools.
- Policies are comprehensive and up to date.
- Although the dedicated team of teachers are non-specialists, they are very experienced, usually confident and enthusiastic.
- Although there is extensive monitoring, it does not give enough information about where help is needed.
- Changes to the team of teachers have made it difficult to fully develop expertise.

Subject issue: how well are pupils prepared for future economic wellbeing?

Students are well prepared for adult life.

- Students from Year 7 onwards begin to explore the world of work through careers education, for example, learning about health and safety at work. Later their experience is extended through Enterprise activities and work experience.
- Students' financial capability is not as well developed.

Inclusion

Inclusion is good.

- There are good strategies for developing the student voice, including a very effective school council.
- The range of extracurricular activities and opportunities to take responsibility include students well.
- In a few lessons, students are not all suitably challenged.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- develop the monitoring of teaching to indicate where support is needed so that lessons are suitably active and provide appropriate challenge for all students
- develop more assessment tasks for PSHE.

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

Susan Orpin
Additional Inspector