

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

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



27 March 2008

Mr S Wilkinson
Headteacher
Monkwearmouth School
Torver Crescent
Seaburn Dene
Sunderland
Tyne and Wear
SR6 8LG

Dear Mr Wilkinson

Ofsted 2007-08 subject survey inspection programme: citizenship

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 25 and 26 March 2008 to look at work in citizenship.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the subject, the visit had a particular focus on provision for teaching and learning about Britain's diversity.

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, meeting with the school council and peer mentors and observation of 11 lessons

The overall effectiveness of citizenship was judged to be satisfactory with some good features.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are satisfactory.

- Students gain knowledge and understanding about how government and Parliament function, social justice, environmental issues and aspects of Britain's diversity. However there are gaps in some key aspects of the citizenship curriculum.
- The development of skills of enquiry and communication is satisfactory and improving. Students have the opportunity to research topics in a

variety of ways and to present their findings. They are competent in using ICT. Students participate well in debates and discussions and enjoy this aspect of the curriculum.

- The lack of assessment means that students do not know how well they are doing or how to improve.
- Students following the ASDAN course have developed links with a school and choir in South Africa. The work they have done in citizenship modules is impressive.
- The school council is well developed and provides an effective student voice. Some students are working with the local Council on the Pupil Voice Development Group.
- Students participate in numerous activities through the school's performing arts status. Peer mentors in Years 10 and 11 play an important role in helping younger students to settle in to school, provide a listening ear for any who are experiencing difficulties and support weaker readers. They have achieved the Diana Award for their excellent contribution.

Quality of teaching and learning of citizenship

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

- Most citizenship teachers have a good knowledge of the areas in which they are teaching and the school has reduced to number of teachers involved to build up expertise of a smaller team.
- Teachers deal well with sensitive issues and manage class discussions effectively so that students can express their views and opinions confidently.
- There is good and outstanding teaching which is characterised by pace, challenge and variety. Students are inspired to broaden their horizons and understand the world around them.
- Overall teaching is satisfactory rather than good because too often challenge and rigour are limited. Students are too passive. This arises from the fact that assessment is inadequate. Students receive verbal feedback on their role in discussions and debates. However, written work is very rarely marked and so students place less importance on it. Teachers do not have a clear idea of how well students are progressing and achieving and so are unable to plan lessons to provide sufficient challenge for all groups of learners.

Quality of the curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory.

- The school has provided a programme which meets the requirements and incorporates the three strands of the National Curriculum, but it is inconsistent and lacking in depth.
- In Key Stage 3 discrete lessons are provided and the course content follows most of the guidelines. However, there is little assessment and so some topics are not differentiated in any way. Reports to parents at the end of the key stage give little information because students have not been properly assessed.

- In Key Stage 4 most students currently follow a non-examined Respect course for 2 lessons each week. The course incorporates religious studies, personal, social and health education, careers and citizenship. Students are unclear about which topics can be regarded as citizenship and receive no feedback on how well they are doing. There is little opportunity for students to feel any sense of achievement.
- Other subjects across the curriculum such as drama, history, geography, English, science, media studies and physical education contribute to citizenship education.
- Some students in Key Stage 4 gain accreditation in citizenship modules through the CoPE (Certificate of Personal Effectiveness) ASDAN award.
- The school is planning to provide short GCSE courses in both religious education and citizenship from next September.
- There are numerous opportunities for students to participate in school and community activities but these are currently not co-ordinated by the department.

Leadership and management of citizenship

The leadership and management of citizenship are satisfactory.

- The development of citizenship is well supported by the senior leadership team. There is agreement that the profile of citizenship within the school needs to be raised and there is good capacity to improve.
- Self-evaluation is now accurate and the school and department leaders are well aware of strengths and what needs to be improved. There is on-going debate about how to develop and improve provision.
- The co-ordinator for Key stage 3 has conducted a recent audit and monitors the impact of work in citizenship on students. A survey of students' responses to citizenship is helping the department to consider a new direction and to introduce greater rigour and to promote better participation and achievement.
- The work of the department is monitored by the curriculum leaders and senior managers.

Subject issue: teaching and learning about Britain's diversity

Provision for teaching and learning about Britain's diversity is satisfactory. Teachers in subject areas such as history, geography and English make a good contribution to raising students' awareness of the diversity of modern Britain. Units within the ASDAN course also contribute well to students' knowledge and understanding with a specific project on the topic of diversity. Through their work in religious education and respect, students have a reasonable understanding of the different faiths practised in Britain today.

Inclusion

The school provides good support for some lower attaining students through smaller groups and teaching and learning styles to best suit their needs. All pupils have access to the citizenship curriculum and numerous opportunities to take part in citizenship-related activities. Projects such as 'Aim Higher' and

Durham University 'Stars' provide encouragement and support for higher attaining students. The school has an inclusive philosophy and aims to ensure that every student is seen as an individual.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- devise and implement an effective system of assessment in both key stages so that students know how well they have done in citizenship and what they need to do to improve their work
- attend to the gaps which exist in coverage at Key Stage 4 so that all aspects of the curriculum are taught effectively
- develop a more cohesive department to promote the sharing of good practice and undoubted expertise within the school
- ensure that all teaching is properly differentiated to provide challenge and support for all learners.

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

Judith Straw
Additional Inspector