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Mr D Ennis
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Dear Mr Ennis

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 04 and 05 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 included interviews with teachers and students, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of students' work and observation of 10 lessons, five of which on the Occasional Curriculum Enhancement (OCE) morning were taken by visiting representatives of outside organisations. It was not possible to visit early morning form times.

The overall effectiveness of citizenship was judged to be inadequate.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are inadequate.

- The majority of students have little knowledge and understanding of citizenship, which is mainly 'invisible' to them because it is not clearly identified or developed so that they can consolidate their learning.

- Students' progress and achievement are not quantifiable because there is no coherent scheme of work for citizenship and no systematic assessment based on this.
- Levels are reported at the end of Key Stage 3 based on the form tutor's summative professional judgement.
- Standards of writing are too uneven. Students complete answer booklets which support citizenship topics in form times, as in Years 8 and 9, but there is no monitoring of the effectiveness of these.
- Students in several groups gain good understanding and skills in citizenship. For example, in GCSE geography they research and evaluate information on the impact of an ageing population on the economy and in BTEC health and social care they plan appropriate caring provision for people of diverse backgrounds.
- Across the school, students' skills of general enquiry are good and they respond and communicate sensitively on issues such as disadvantage and the rights of the individual.
- Students act responsibly in the school council, which they feel gives them a voice and is effective. Take-up is high of opportunities to participate in the life of the school. Large numbers of students, including sixth formers, benefit from opportunities to plan and take responsibility for others, for example, as senior students, prefects, coaching younger pupils and raising money for charities. Response is very good by students in all years to recycling and maintaining a litter-free environment.

Quality of teaching and learning of citizenship

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

- A notable strength of teaching across the school is the extent to which students' awareness is raised of citizenship issues in lessons in other subjects. Teachers draw well on their specialist knowledge and use a good range of approaches to enable students to appreciate responsibility at individual, community and global levels as, for example, in art work on the fur trade, and on war.
- Relationships are good. In the climate of respect and enjoyment, students of all backgrounds work well together and express their views freely. They are supportive of each other even when they disagree.
- Students are open-minded, confident learners who take pride in their own and others' achievements and are willing to help others. They have good capacity to work in groups and independently. An outstanding student in Year 8, recently elected to be Youth MP in Wolverhampton City Youth Council, is exercising a high level of initiative in taking action to benefit ethnically mixed groups locally and young people nationally through participation in a national forum.
- Many others have opportunity to develop teamwork and leadership skills fostered by the school's participation in the Global Institute for Raising Students' (GISA) Aspirations programme, and its impact on teaching and learning.
- Specialist knowledge of citizenship among teachers is thin. The co-ordinator attends training, provided at meetings convened by the local authority. Newly qualified teachers have useful understanding of

citizenship, gained as part of their initial training, but do not have any particular role in citizenship. No organised briefing sessions have been provided for all teachers at the school.

- During OCE sessions many visitors raise students' awareness of issues such as their rights, the legal system, and the work of voluntary organisations. Visitors quickly establish good relationships with students and their lessons are popular. Presentations are lively and well-illustrated, sometimes superbly, as in the furnished cell of a young offenders' institute. However, opportunities are missed to link these experiences directly to students' progress in citizenship because they are not accounted for in a coherent scheme of work.
- There is no system for assessing students' progress in citizenship. Assessment, when seen, was of students' progress in another subject, which was a vehicle for an aspect of citizenship.

Quality of the curriculum

The curriculum is inadequate.

- The time allocated for citizenship is too low. Core time is partly within OCE which is one half day provided four times a year, possibly amounting to 7.5 hours' citizenship. Every week one early-morning form time (20 minutes) is designated as citizenship; the school has evaluated this as weak. These elements are supplemented by relevant work in other subjects.
- There is no scheme of work. Citizenship topics have been mapped in OCE, form times and across the curriculum but arrangements are not coherently planned and do not provide progression in learning.
- Sixth form tutors helpfully steer students towards voluntary placements in businesses and the wider world. These benefit students' development and help them to appreciate how organisations, such as the health service, work.

Leadership and management of citizenship

The leadership and management of citizenship are inadequate.

- Implementation of citizenship is weak in spite of a reasonable policy statement because of inadequate curricular time, lack of any coherent scheme of work linked to systematic assessment of students' progress, and there is no monitoring of the effectiveness of provision. The school's self-evaluation is in line with these findings. The school recognises that development of citizenship has been slow and is formulating plans for improvement.
- Management of citizenship has been divided and is low-profile. As a result, aspects of citizenship have tended to permeate the curriculum rather than feature within it.
- However, improvements in other aspects of the school's work and the recognition of weaknesses in citizenship suggest that capacity to improve in citizenship is good.

Subject issue: teaching and learning about Britain's diversity

- Provision is effective. Relevant topics are covered in citizenship in form time in Years 8 and 9, with a further topic to be introduced in Year 7; these are supported by booklets. Significant planned contributions are made in subjects such as religious education, history, geography and design and technology and, for older students, in BTEC courses and politics. Students say that teachers are good at explaining the social and political contexts of their learning, as in English, history and art.
- Learning opportunities resulting from the impact of the GISA programme on teaching develop the confidence of individuals in their own abilities, alongside respect for others and enjoyment in learning.
- Topical issues are covered in assemblies and two flat-screen TVs have recently been installed in central areas. News is screened at social times in the school day. Current citizenship provision does not take particular account of topical events but students say form tutors and subject teachers refer to those which are relevant, in lessons.

Inclusion

- The school is a democratic and supportive community within which all groups are respected, participate and mix happily. Students vote for school councillors, nominate themselves as senior students and recently voted in elections for Wolverhampton City Youth Councillors and Youth MPs. Representation on these groups reflects the make-up of the school, as does participation in the large number of sports activities, which have been surveyed. Students say that their teachers are good at involving students who, in the first instance, may not win their chosen place.
- In lessons observed extra teachers (as in OCE) and teaching assistants were attentive to the learning needs of individuals and helped them to keep up with others. However, the planning of a variety of activities to take account of the range of students' abilities was seen once only.
- Specialist support for the visually handicapped students is impressive. These students are confident learners. They are treated courteously and helpfully by staff and other students, even at crowded break times.
- The school reaches out to the wider community, especially through the many links it fosters as a sports college. Students develop good leadership and organisational skills in sports leadership courses and when organising events such as the successful Festivals of Sport.
- Special events, such as the Dhesi Day, cultivate and celebrate links with the local community. Participation by many visitors is high, especially those of Indian heritage.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- provide a coherent scheme of work and more time for citizenship so that learning is progressive with linked assessment opportunities
- provide training for all teachers so that they can contribute effectively in the overall programme
- strengthen the management of citizenship, so that it is on a par with other National Curriculum subjects.

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 local Learning and Skills Council and will be published on the Ofsted website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Barbara Hilton
Additional Inspector