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Mr N Daymond
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Daymond

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 13 and 14 March 2008 to look at work in PSHE.

As outlined in my initial discussion and introductory 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 students (including sixth form students) in your local area, and how progress is tracked and assessed; and the leadership & management offered in the area
- the inclusive contribution made by PSHE to the future economic well-being of your students.

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 should we wish to cite specific aspects of practice we will contact the school first. 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 and an assistant headteacher, as well as the PSHE co-ordinator, the School Sports co-ordinator, and the school council. I undertook lesson observations, a scrutiny of relevant documentation, saw examples of students' work and watched a school assembly.

The overall effectiveness of PSHE is judged to be outstanding.

Achievement in PSHE

Achievement in PSHE is outstanding.

- KS4 students are entered for the GCSE short course in Religious Education (RE) with outstanding results, and the submitted coursework has a high moral, spiritual and citizenship component (98% A*-C in 2007).
- Students know what is meant by a balanced diet and how to keep healthy. Students have very good knowledge of the dangers of smoking, drugs and alcohol. Students are secure in their knowledge about what it means to be a good citizen and show wide understanding of global issues.
- Students' developmental understanding of Sex and Relationships issues is outstanding.
- Personal development is now outstanding. Student behaviour is outstanding and supported by monitoring outcomes through the rewards and consequences system.
- Students enjoy their PSHE lessons. They work well together and are able to listen, reflect, discuss and present their own opinions confidently, particularly in progressing to the sixth form.

Quality of Teaching and Learning of PSHE

The quality of PSHE teaching and learning is outstanding.

- Careers and PSHE co-ordinators have very good subject knowledge, well-developed schemes of work exist, and the team leaders act as managers to teaching teams and support professional development.
- Teaching uses a range of learning styles including use of drama, student presentations, information and communication technology (ICT) and library research. The quality of teaching and learning is regularly monitored for impact and evaluated.
- All the teachers observed made very good use of lesson planning and facilitated students' engagement in discussion and problem-solving.
- Assessment is outstanding. The school's specialist college status means that very good statistical data is being held on student progress, and this is analysed and levels of attainment reported to students.
- Students are very well supported. They feel safe and secure and have a range of adults and teaching staff to support them.

Quality of curriculum

The curriculum is outstanding.

- The planning of curriculum is outstanding as shown by the school's current PSHE review and newly developed teaching and learning materials.

- The school has fully prepared for the Healthy School Award and this has had a positive impact on lunchtime, healthy eating, and the curriculum – although it needs to complete its submission.
- The cross-curricular contribution and specialist status offer excellent support to core personal development. Extra-curricular contributions include a 'driver awareness' course, career fairs, and multi-cultural events with much charitable fund-raising by students.
- The school has a very well managed behaviour policy with 'quality of life' surveys undertaken to inform impact. The school campus has been risk-analysed and environment zones and resources applied to ensure harmony and avoid hidden areas. It has Innovative Practice Awards in anti-bullying and emotional learning for students.
- Some sixth form students participate in 'World Challenge' activities, working charitably on an international basis or progressing to GAP years.

Leadership and management of PSHE

The leadership and management of PSHE are outstanding.

- Rigorous monitoring and evaluation of impact and outcomes from the school's PSHE provision, and cross-curricular integration, are evident. The quality of co-ordination, policies and training are outstanding. There are very well-planned cycles of review of impact for main school and post-16 students in all curriculum areas.

Subject issue: How well are students prepared for future economic well-being?

Students are very well prepared for adult life.

- Older students feel well prepared for the move to employment, further education and higher education institutions.
- Effective use is made of 'Enterprise' within coursework contributing to significant fund-raising for charities, along with well-organised work experience, careers fairs working with Connexions, business partnerships and a range of external speakers.
- Students are all provided with a range of curricular initiatives in which they take responsibility and are expected to use their initiative.
- There are several very well-planned units of work in PSHE on financial awareness.

Inclusion

Evidence has been seen of very good inclusion practice.

- The school is fully committed to providing for the full range of needs and abilities including disability access and work with partial hearing students.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- confirming the 'Healthy Schools' status in an award. The school already appears to have all the key and requisite features.

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

Sa'ad Khaldi
Additional Inspector