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Mr R Halford
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Dear Mr Halford

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Physical Education

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 26 and 27 February 2008 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 contribution that PE makes 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 pupils' work, observation of four lessons, pastoral sport and extra-curricular activities.

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

Achievement and standards

Pupils' achievement is outstanding and standards are high.

- Pupils' involvement in physical education and sport supports their outstanding personal development.
- Considerably more pupils than in most schools take GCSE PE and results are consistently better than the national average. A high proportion of pupils gained A*/A grades in 2007. Pupils consistently

gain better results than the highly challenging targets set for them and their results in PE are better than most of the other subjects they take.

- Around 45 pupils each year gain the Junior Sport Leader Award. A small number are taking the Dance Leader Award. A few older pupils are starting the Community Sport Leader Award.
- Many individuals, including pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and school teams are successful in local, county and sometimes national level competition. There are particular strengths in football, netball, athletics, rugby, cross-country running, tennis and volleyball.
- Pupils make good progress throughout the school and respond very well to the great breadth of opportunities available to them.
- Pupils acquire and develop skills at a very good rate across a range of activities. They are confident in planning strategies and improvements to performance. They analyse and evaluate their own and others' work and suggest improvements. Most pupils understand how exercise can help to keep healthy.

Quality of teaching and learning of PE

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding.

- Pupils rise to teachers' very high expectations of progress, achievement and conduct. Relationships are very positive and teachers get the best from the pupils.
- Teachers' very secure knowledge of the subject and how to teach it ensure that activities in lessons are varied, well paced and progressively challenging. Pupils feel that lessons are demanding but fun. They say that they work hard and learn a great deal.
- Pupils know exactly what they are aiming to achieve in lessons. Teachers' frequent guidance to individuals and the whole class in both practical and theory work ensures that pupils know what to do to improve.
- Systems to assess and record pupils' progress and schemes of work are securely in place but do not fully identify pupils' progress and achievements in all elements of PE, e.g. leadership, knowledge and understanding of health and fitness.
- Regular demanding homework and extra revision sessions support pupils' progress in accredited courses.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) is used increasingly to support learning and teaching, especially in accredited courses.

Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is outstanding.

- All pupils in Years 7 to 9 and a high proportion in Years 10 and 11 experience at least 2 hours of high quality physical education each week.
- The curriculum is fully inclusive of all pupils. A broad range of activities meets pupils' different interests and needs.

- A very good range of accredited courses is offered to pupils and includes courses in leadership and officiating, and vocational accreditation.
- An excellent range of extra-curricular sport provides pupils with many opportunities to follow their interests and achieve in sport and dance.
- The programme of Pastoral Sporting events gives all pupils the chance to take part in competitive team activities at least once each half term.

Leadership and management of PE

The effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding.

- Leadership of the faculty provides great enthusiasm and a commitment to maintaining high standards.
- Equally important to leaders and the faculty is the inclusion of all pupils in PE and sport, and the promotion of their personal development through enjoyment and participation in PE and sport.
- A strong team of staff works towards these common aims and is very well supported by senior leaders.
- Good levels of professional development support continually improving provision.
- Self-evaluation by senior and faculty leaders is accurate and leads to identifying the correct priorities for improvement. However, the faculty's systems to check on the effectiveness of their work and recent developments on pupils' achievements are not as systematic as they could be.
- Good attention is paid to pupils' safety and risk assessments are in place.

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

PE makes an outstanding contribution to the outcomes of Every Child Matters.

- The Healthy School Award reflects the school and the faculty's commitment to providing secure education for all pupils in how to stay healthy. Pupils appreciate the many opportunities for healthy activity provided by the faculty at lunchtimes and after school.
- Very high levels of participation in lessons, intra-school competitions, extra-curricular clubs and teams reflect pupils' enthusiasm for taking regular exercise.
- The 'Healthy Day' organised for pupils in Year 7 provides a secure basis for pupils' understanding of how to maintain a healthy lifestyle.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in PE lessons. Courses on self-defence are popular.
- PE gives pupils many opportunities to achieve highly in GCSE and vocational courses and to gain awards for sport and dance leadership. Pupils taking leadership courses surprise themselves in how much they gain in confidence through the training and work they carry out with younger pupils.

- Pupils across the school are resoundingly positive about their experiences in PE and they thoroughly enjoy lessons that are fun and hard work.
- PE gives pupils many chances to contribute to the school and the wider community through, for example, participation in the 'Pastoral Sports' events, leading activities for younger pupils and through taking on responsibilities as PE prefects and sports captains.
- The many opportunities PE and sport provide for pupils to work together in teams and the self-confidence they gain through achieving well in the many varied experiences prepare pupils exceedingly well for their future lives.
- Pupils are well prepared to select pathways that may interest them in PE and sport at age 16. They are less aware of the opportunities that exist in higher education.

Inclusion

The commitment of the faculty to the inclusion of all pupils in high quality PE and sport is outstanding.

- Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are very well provided for. A mix of participation in full class activities and finely tailored programmes that meet additional needs help pupils to develop self-confidence and enjoy participation in sport. Specific programmes designed to develop pupils' gross and fine motor skills are successful.
- Innovative ideas that help to motivate and interest pupils, particularly those with learning and/or disabilities are continually being developed. These include activities such as archery, New Age Kurling and the physical performance of computerised versions of games such as tennis or golf. These use arm actions and a hand control in response to action on a screen.
- A variety of sporting activities, including wrestling, are organised alongside other education experiences to motivate pupils in danger of losing interest in their education.
- Gifted and talented pupils are supported in developing their full range of talents. They are encouraged to take part in sport through the school's many links with local sporting clubs and to represent their school, district or county in competitions.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- develop schemes of work and systems of assessment to fully identify pupils' progress and achievements in all elements of PE
- improve the faculty's systems to check on the effectiveness of their work and recent developments on pupils' progress and achievements.

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

Gillian Salter-Smith
Additional Inspector