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Mr G Thompson  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Thompson

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 06 and 10 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 and observation of lessons and two assemblies.

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

#### Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are good with outstanding elements.

- Students have a very good understanding and awareness of rights and responsibilities, law and politics and a good basic knowledge of the European Union, the Commonwealth and the United Nations.
- Students' participation in and contributions to school and community life, particularly in the sixth form, is excellent. Students' good citizenship is rewarded and each month over fifty of them are nominated for a Jack Petchey award.

- Sixth formers contribute much to school life in terms of behaviour, health and safety, promoting fund-raising, environmental awareness and social harmony.
- The school council participates in the annual Remembrance Day ceremony and helps to interview staff. The council has yet to consider issues in the wider community.
- The school's technology specialism is reflected in the turbine on site, launched in 2007. This has raised students' and staff's awareness of global energy issues. The school has a Green Flag Eco award and a large number of students is involved in numerous environmental projects. Groups of students make presentations on sustainability to primary schools.
- Students are encouraged to take an interest in the news. Some tutors, especially in the sixth form, do this well in form time.

### Quality of teaching and learning of citizenship

The quality of teaching and learning is good. During the visit only citizenship work in geography was observed.

- In an excellent lesson on sweatshops, Year 8 students examined clothes to see where they were made and considered the low wages and hard working conditions in some countries.
- Teachers use the interactive whiteboard well, for example to show video clips of African street children.
- A lower attaining Year 8 group enjoyed using Google Earth to consider locations that are significant to them. This project has the potential to contribute to work in citizenship.
- The quality of marking of citizenship work ranges from excellent, for example "Listen out for the BNP in the news and think about what your opinion is about them", to satisfactory.
- The sheets to record students' participation in school life and outside school are excellent but, as yet, are not being used well by all form tutors.

### Quality of the curriculum

The curriculum is good.

- The school delivers the citizenship programmes of study mainly through other subjects with a few discrete lessons in the personal, social, health and citizenship (PSHCE) programme. Both methods of delivery are increasingly successful.
- The recent involvement of Year 11 form tutors in preparing and sharing discrete citizenship lessons has led to some imaginative and well considered lesson plans. These plans show that teachers are prepared to confront difficult issues, such as how to avoid terrorism, as well as giving students excellent, practical information, such as on volunteering in the local community.
- The careers programme covers some citizenship issues well, for example stereotyping in the work place.

- As most citizenship topics are taught by form tutors or subject teachers, students cover slightly different topics and not all in the same depth.
- The school is aware that further work is needed to extend students' knowledge as they become older, for example on human rights, and to check overlap when a topic is covered by several subjects in one year.
- Several subjects stimulate discussions, for example on moral issues in English, animal testing in science or recycling in design and technology.
- History schemes of work for Years 7 to 9 include 'overarching questions' such as 'When is conflict justified?'. These strengthen its contribution to citizenship.
- Students take challenging examinations in citizenship in Years 9 and 10. All departments contribute questions for them.

### Leadership and management of citizenship

The leadership and management of citizenship are good.

- The co-ordinator for citizenship is experienced and enthusiastic about the subject. She brings realism about how much can be expected of tutors and works hard to simplify procedures and materials.
- The comment boxes used to assess work are effective. Some tutors use these better than others. The forms for students to record their work in citizenship and their contributions to school and community life are an excellent idea.
- All assessment and reporting requirements are met.
- Because she has a tutor group, the citizenship co-ordinator is not able to observe discrete lessons in the subject to evaluate the content and the quality of teaching.
- You and your senior management team support the subject with interest and are fully involved in deliberations about how best to improve delivery of the citizenship programmes of study.
- Several teachers and heads of department are very enthusiastic about citizenship and contribute well to its development.

### Subject issue: teaching and learning about Britain's diversity

- The discrete citizenship lessons in Year 10 include lessons on the diversity of society in the United Kingdom linked with consideration of refugees and asylum seekers.
- Students value the cultural and ethnic diversity of the school's population. They keenly discuss their own roots and sense of Britishness.
- Religious education lessons include consideration of other faiths and respect for those from different cultures.
- The school celebrates the Chinese New Year and religious festivals such as Diwali.
- Black History month is a well established event.
- The school puts on a very popular annual show each year where the culture, music and drama of different ethnic groups are celebrated.

- The English department's study of racism, linked with work in history on slavery and apartheid, helps students to appreciate the diversity of the population in the United Kingdom.

#### Inclusion

- In lessons on citizenship topics, teachers are fully aware of students' individual needs, for example preparing enlarged text for visually impaired students or helping students to use computers during lessons.
- Students help others with learning difficulties and disabilities well in lessons.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- to generate greater coherence and progression, review students' experience of citizenship in different tutor groups and the content of citizenship within other subjects
- arrange for the subject co-ordinator to have time to observe the content and the quality of teaching in discrete citizenship lessons.

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 school inspection.

Yours sincerely

Clare Gillies  
Additional Inspector