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02 May 2008

Mr S Clark
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Dear Mr Clark

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Physical Education

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 15 and 16 April 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 PE contribution 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 students' work and observation of eight part lessons.

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

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in PE are good.

- Standards are above average by the end of Key Stage 3, with no differences between the standards of boys and girls.
- GCSE results are above average with girls attaining a significantly above average number of the highest grades. Boys frequently attain their highest results in PE. Standards are also above average for A Level courses.
- GCSE dance is offered as part of the Performing Arts faculty and standards are well above average.
- All students make good progress in lessons because of the quality of teaching, particularly in the A Level theory classes observed.

- Planning includes the development of the four strands of PE although these are not then specifically assessed to track students' progress in these aspects over time. Students acquire, develop and select skills well. There is less consistency in the development and use of the evaluate and improvement strand. Students have good understanding of developing a healthy lifestyle and aspects of fitness.
- Students' personal development is greatly enhanced through PE. Many comment that completing the Sports Leader Award in Year 11 has helped improve their communication skills and self-confidence in and around the school.
- Students are given good opportunities to take a variety of roles within PE, such as house sports captains, peer coaching and independent warm-ups. The vast majority of students say how much they enjoy PE, which is reflected in the high levels of participation in lessons.

Quality of teaching and learning of PE

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall.

- All teachers have in-depth subject knowledge that they use very effectively to ensure students make good progress in their learning.
- A good variety of teaching methods is used to motivate, engage and stimulate students' interest and enthusiasm for PE. Some teachers are particularly skilled at using questioning techniques to enable students to recall previous work, relate it to new learning and fully extend students' knowledge and depth of understanding their work. This good practice needs to be shared within the department.
- Relationships are outstanding between staff and students enabling good use of humour to add a further dimension to good teaching. Students comment particularly positively on the atmosphere of mutual respect.
- Lesson planning is thorough, although units of work are currently written in different formats. Most effective practice in this aspect gives good attention to the development of the four strands of PE over time.
- A good range of activities are included in lessons for students of different ability levels, which is an improvement since the last PE inspection. Students clearly describe how they are challenged to achieve their best in lessons. Keen observations of progress during lessons enables staff to make timely intervention and give instant feedback to bring about improvement.
- Theory work is marked thoroughly with very helpful comments on how to improve and gain more marks in examination questions. The 'milestone marking' sheet is particularly effective.
- Assessment procedures have improved since the last PE inspection, especially for self-assessment by students. However, not enough emphasis is given to the consistent assessment and tracking of all aspects of PE including leadership or coaching roles.
- Assessment for learning strategies are starting to be used but this is not consistent across the department. Where they are used well, such as in the Year 9 tennis lesson, other staff would benefit from observing this approach to teaching.

Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good overall.

- Students in Years 7 and 8 receive two hours of planned curriculum PE with additional time for dance through Performing Arts. The time for Years 9, 10 and 11 has increased since the last PE inspection but only those following a GCSE course access two hours of PE and school sport. You are already exploring a number of ways to improve this position.
- Unusually Year 12 students have one hour of curriculum PE; the majority appreciate the wide range of choice available to them during this session especially when using off-site facilities to meet their specific interests.
- The curriculum and extra-curricular activities are dominated by team games which does not meet the interests of all students.
- The core Key Stage 4 curriculum has improved since the last PE inspection with students able to choose pathways of leadership, competitive sport or fitness. There is more limited opportunity for them to choose an aesthetic or creative route other than GCSE dance.
- A good and improving range of extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities is offered. More opportunities are becoming available as a result of involvement in the school sport partnership, such as martial arts and water sports. Students are very positive about the widening of activities and would welcome more. Excellent opportunities are available for a broad range of inter-house sports competitions.

Leadership and management of PE

The quality of leadership and management is good.

- Staff know their department well and are already sharing good practice during the professional development opportunities at department meetings. Not enough use is made of peer observation. Staff are able to verbalise the priorities for development which have been recorded at the end of the academic year; however, no plan of action was available at the time of the inspection.
- Students in Key Stage 3 have a good understanding of their National Curriculum level of attainment and what they need to do to improve because of the improved assessment procedures. However tracking progress over time requires strengthening. The assessment and tracking procedures for Key Stage 4 are good.
- Monitoring and evaluation of the subject occurs through the performance management procedures.
- Teachers in the PE department have fully embraced the school sport partnership, with significant impact already seen through extended extra-curricular activities especially for girls, additional equipment and increased leadership accreditation opportunities.
- The department has achieved success in examination classes and PE lessons whilst working in difficult circumstances related to extensive

building works. Although there is a degree of frustration that fields have been bisected by the builder's access road, all staff have worked hard to ensure this has not had a detrimental impact on students' learning or enjoyment of the subject. You are working closely with the local authority and external agencies to improve and extend the PE facilities on and around the school site.

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

- All students are helped to develop a good understanding of leading a healthy lifestyle. This has a high profile in the work of the PE department, such as specific units for health and fitness and a good focus during warm-up and cool-down aspects of lessons.
- In two of the lessons observed, good reference was made to transferring aspects of fitness between different sports.
- All students work co-operatively and safely together in and around the PE area. This becomes particularly important when in the cramped changing facilities.
- Year 11 and sixth form students make a positive contribution to the local community when using their leadership skills during work with local primary schools and younger students in the school.

Inclusion

- All students are fully involved in PE lessons; teachers ensure all are engaged through targeted questioning and interventions.
- Students identified as gifted and talented in PE are offered an increasing number of activities to extend their skills such as development squads, Youth Sport Trust training camps and a week's activity camp.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- finding ways to increase the time available for Year 9, 10 and 11 PE and school sport
- reviewing assessment procedures to include more emphasis on the four strands and other aspects of PE such as leadership
- finding ways to share identified good practices more widely across the department.

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

Judith Rundle
Her Majesty's Inspector