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Dear Dr Hopkin

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Physical Education

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 30 April 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 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 pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' reports and observation of three lessons.

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

Achievement and standards

Most pupils make good progress in PE.

- Foundation Stage assessments show that children enter Reception with physical skills which are well below expected levels. Although they make good progress in their physical development, standards remain below average by the start of Year 1. Progress continues to be good across Key Stages 1 and 2, so that by the time pupils leave in Year 6, most attain average standards.
- Many pupils make good progress in swimming although forty percent of Year 6 pupils were unable to swim 25 metres before they left last year.

- Pupils' achievements in all areas of learning in PE are recorded and monitored closely. These records show that achievement varies a little across the areas of learning and between year groups. Following an analysis of this tracking data, underachieving groups of pupils have been identified and suitable action is being taken to help them achieve more in PE. There are also targets set to improve outcomes in swimming and involve pupils in outdoor and adventurous activities.

### Quality of teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning in PE is good.

- Three lessons were observed during the inspection; two were good and one was satisfactory.
- Teachers' planning is detailed and sharply focussed on learning outcomes. Excellent use is made of information and communication technology, particularly for modelling and assessment. Very good support is provided by teaching assistants and teachers use their own and pupils' demonstrations well to enhance their explanations. Teachers' high expectations ensure learning is purposeful.
- Pupils are able to develop their skills in all four learning strands of PE. They cooperate well in pairs and groups. Teachers apply several approaches to differentiation to match learning activities to pupils' skill levels and abilities. Effective questioning, observation and coaching enable teachers to assess pupils' responses and help them to improve their performances. We discussed aspects of the lessons which were less effective, such as pitching learning activities more precisely for younger children and encouraging more pupils to contribute in plenary discussions.

### Quality of the curriculum

The curriculum has been strengthened in the last year and is now good.

- Long and medium term plans have been revised to provide a balanced learning programme. Pupils benefit from two hours of PE in their weekly timetable. A detailed scheme of work guides teachers' lesson planning and ensures continuity and progression in learning. There are good plans to improve provision in outdoor and adventurous activities by introducing orienteering.
- Training for all staff in teaching dance and gymnastics has strengthened these areas of learning. Accommodation is satisfactory and good improvements are planned, including another hall space and additional outdoor facilities. There is a good range of equipment available for outdoor learning in the Foundation Stage.
- Pupils from Years 2 to 6 have the chance to take part in extra curricular sports activities. Participation rates are modest and a greater variety of club activities are to be introduced in September; this follows discussions with pupils and includes minority sports such as fencing.
- The school's involvement in the school sport partnership has been used productively to employ coaches to lead sessions in several activities. Pupils have also had the chance to take part in local festivals and tournaments.

We discussed how more opportunities through intra-school competitions and extended educational visits would enhance provision further. We also discussed how involvement in the 'top-up' swimming programme might help more pupils reach the national curriculum swimming standard.

## Leadership and management

Leadership and management of PE are outstanding.

- The subject leader provides a very good role model for her colleagues and is strongly committed to improving standards and achievement. An efficient team leadership structure enables the subject leader to work effectively with a number of staff on improving provision. They receive excellent support from you, which gives PE a high profile. A very comprehensive written evaluation identifies strengths in PE and aspects which require improvement.
- The sport partnership training for primary link teachers has been used well to extend the subject leader's skills. Posters which illustrate the ten high quality outcomes in PE are displayed in the school hall.
- Several useful monitoring and evaluation activities have been undertaken to keep a check on the quality of provision and draw up proposals for improvement. Teachers' planning is scrutinised regularly, observations of lessons have identified aspects of teaching which require strengthening, and parents' and pupils' views have been canvassed. Informative evaluation reports record the outcomes of the monitoring activities and these are shared with staff and governors. Rigorous checks are also made on the attainment and progress made by pupils. Further improvements are proposed for teachers' assessments by using core task activities.

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

- Pupils' personal development and well-being are enhanced by their involvement in PE and sport. Improvements already secured and those proposed are designed to have a positive impact on pupils' increased participation and fitness. Pupils participate enthusiastically in lessons. They have the chance to take decisions in group activities and work cooperatively with their peers. They can talk about why warming up is important and know what happens to their bodies when they are active.
- Pupils interviewed know that it is important to take exercise to keep fit. They appreciate that eating healthily and avoiding harmful substances also contributes to a healthy lifestyle. Older pupils have recently been given responsibility for leading play activities at lunchtime by organising 'huff and puff' activities. Wake up and shake up sessions are running in the Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1 to increase physical activity. We discussed how the school might involve older pupils in keeping a check on their fitness.

## Inclusion

- All pupils are fully included in PE lessons. Teachers' lesson planning identifies a range of approaches and activities to match pupils' learning needs. Teaching assistants observed in lessons provide very good support for groups and individuals. The subject leader has identified pupils who are underachieving and additional activities are planned, such as the 'inspire' workshops for Pakistani pupils and their parents, to boost attainment and participation.
- Pupils who are talented at sport are recognised and linked with local community sports clubs. We discussed provision for pupils who may have coordination difficulties and would benefit from additional fine and gross motor activities.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- increasing pupils' participation in extra curricular activities and competitions and improving their overall fitness levels
- developing outdoor play facilities and looking into the possibility of introducing playground zones
- including pupils in the 'top-up' swimming programme to increase the proportion achieving the National Curriculum standard.

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

Rob McKeown  
Her Majesty's Inspector