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Mr E de Middelaer  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr de Middelaer

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 with Margaret Jones HMI on Wednesday 18 and Thursday 19 June 2008 to look at work in PSHE.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of PSHE, the visit had a particular focus on:

- how the PSHE curriculum meets the specific needs of pupils in your local area, and how progress is tracked and assessed; and
- the contribution made by PSHE, in particular careers education, to the future economic well-being of your pupils.

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 you and senior staff, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of students' work, observation of four Year 10 lessons, discussions with five groups of students, and a visit to the Enterprise Centre. It was not possible to observe any lessons in Years 11, 12 or 13.

The overall effectiveness of PSHE was judged to be good.

## Achievement and standards

Achievement in PSHE is good.

- Students across the school have good knowledge and understanding about what is meant by a balanced diet and apply it.
- They also have good knowledge and understanding about sex and drugs education and know where to go for individual advice and support.
- Students' awareness of citizenship and careers options are less well developed.
- Students are mature, thoughtful and able to reflect on their experiences. They have positive attitudes to their learning in PSHE, listen well to each other, are very articulate and able to express their views with confidence.

## Quality of teaching and learning of PSHE

The quality of teaching and learning in PSHE is good.

- Lessons are well planned with clear objectives that are shared with students.
- Good questioning strategies involve and engage students well.
- Teaching encourages the development of good personal and social skills, for example listening, discussion, persuasion and reflection.
- Teachers have high expectations of learning outcomes and behaviour.
- The quality of teaching in extended tutor time is only satisfactory. It is inconsistent across classes and over-reliant on work sheets.
- Assessment is currently satisfactory. It is better developed in religious education and Learning Skills than in tutorials.

## Quality of the curriculum

The PSHE curriculum is satisfactory.

- The PSHE curriculum is in transition. Year 10 students study PSHE either through religious education or Learning Skills and an extended tutorial period. As such, the curriculum is too fragmented.
- There are currently no schemes of work for PSHE.
- Year 10 students enjoy the innovative Learning Skills course. There are plans to extend this to Years 11 to 13.
- The Healthy Schools award has had a positive impact on raising the profile of the PSHE curriculum.
- External agencies are very well used to enhance the provision. For example, the school nurse, local GP and bank, and the prison.
- The Strictly Confidential drop in service is highly valued by students.
- Provision for vulnerable students is outstanding. There is good identification of those in need of additional support. The individualised programmes succeed in developing the students' personal and social skills and in meeting their emotional needs.

## Leadership and management of PSHE

The leadership and management of PSHE are good.

- A recent review of PSHE identified its shortcomings. Subsequent action has improved Year 10 provision considerably. There are detailed plans to extend this programme to Years 11-13.
- The leadership of the new Learning Skills programme in Year 10 is outstanding. Students are making rapid progress.
- The impact of training for tutors to deliver the extended tutor period has been variable.
- The pulling together of the various components of PSHE is insufficiently developed.

Subject issue: the quality of careers education and guidance is satisfactory.

- There is a planned programme taught through extended tutor time, but this is of variable quality.
- There is an effective working relationship with the Connexions service and students have access to accurate and impartial careers advice and guidance. Careers events are held throughout the year.
- There is a careers library and information communication technology (ICT) resources, although students report these are not well used.
- Work experience is planned into the careers programme. However, this experience is insufficiently used across the curriculum to improve learning or to make links with future career options.
- Vulnerable students receive outstanding support for their individual career destinations.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- writing a scheme of work for PSHE that takes account of all the various strands of provision
- improving the quality of careers education and guidance.

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

Clive Kempton  
Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools