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Mrs I Rincon
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Rincon

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 on 10 June 2008 to look at work in PSHE.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the subject, 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 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 yourself, the managers of inclusion, religious education, PSHE and the curriculum manager, the ethnic minority achievement teacher, the learning mentor and pupils from a range of age groups, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of two lessons and briefer visits to other lessons.

The overall effectiveness of PSHE was judged to be good.

Achievement and Standards

Pupils' overall achievement in PSHE is good.

- Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Pupils are confident, articulate and have well developed discussion skills. They are very caring, thoughtful and polite, and can work independently or together in a group or team.
- Pupils have a secure knowledge of how to stay healthy and they understand the meaning of a balanced diet and the importance of exercise. Older pupils know about the dangers of tobacco and alcohol, and they have a sound understanding of the changes that occur whilst growing up.
- Pupils have produced some high quality work, for example on Fair Trade and during International Week.
- Pupils have a secure understanding of what being a good citizen involves, and they know the importance of laws and the role of local and national government.

Quality of teaching and learning in PSHE

The quality of PSHE teaching is good.

- Teachers have excellent relationships with their classes and they provide exemplary role models.
- Teachers have high expectations and are very encouraging. They plan interesting and varied activities and manage pupils' behaviour very well.
- Occasionally, there are too many learning objectives, so the purpose of the lesson is unclear. Sometimes the teacher talks for too long, so pupils are not as active as they might be.
- Teaching assistants are effective in helping more vulnerable pupils concentrate on their work.
- Pupils' social skills are assessed regularly to provide extra support, but teachers do not yet assess PSHE in a way that helps pupils know how well they are doing or that demonstrates the progress they are making.
- Pupils are extremely well supported. They feel safe and know there are adults who will help them if a problem arises.

Quality of the curriculum

The curriculum is good with outstanding features.

- The creative, innovative approach to the curriculum ensures that pupils enjoy PSHE.
- The complex, cross-curricular approach to planning has not yet been captured in a scheme of work, making the monitoring of PSHE and citizenship more difficult.
- Judicious use is made of SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) materials to boost pupils' emotional development. The curriculum is also enhanced by an exceptionally good range of visitors, trips, special events and extra-curricular activities, which allows pupils to practise the skills they have learned.

- The work of the learning mentor and the ethnic minority achievement teacher makes a strong contribution to ensuring the inclusion of all pupils.
- The Healthy Schools award has had a positive impact on lunchtimes and playtimes.

Leadership and management of PSHE

The leadership and management of PSHE are outstanding.

- PSHE is given a high priority and is led extremely well by yourself.
- Your enthusiasm is shared by staff who recognise the subject's significance in the school.
- Whilst there has been some monitoring of pupils' work, the lack of assessment records and specific PSHE lesson observations means that monitoring is not as effective as it might be.

Subject issue: how well are pupils prepared for future economic well-being?

Pupils' preparation for adult life is good.

- Pupils show remarkable independence in lessons and through their personal opinions. They work together as a team and co-operate extremely well.
- The school council is very active and there are many opportunities for pupils to take responsibility.
- Not enough work takes place on managing personal finance and the world of work.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- writing a scheme of work that encompasses the many wide ranging opportunities for pupils to learn PSHE
- developing the assessment of pupils' progress and the monitoring of the quality of their experience in PSHE and citizenship.

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

Susan Orpin
Additional Inspector