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Dear Mr Phillips

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Physical Education

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 24 and 25 of September 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 (ECM) 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 seven lessons.

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

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in PE are good.

- By the end of Year 9 and in Year 10 most students reach standards above and some well above the national expectation.
- Staff at Acle High say the work of the school sports partnership in primary schools has helped to raise standards at the time of entry to the school. The knowledge, understanding and skills demonstrated by the present Year 7 is above that typically seen nationally.
- Students make good progress in the four strands. They show good ability to analyse their own and others' performance and are able to plan and use their own ideas effectively in invasion games. In a Year 10 games lesson,

the principles of sport education involving students taking on different roles and responsibilities were especially well applied.

- Performance skills are less well refined across the school. Work in Year 10 reflected standards above average but not as high as teacher assessments indicate.
- Attendance and participation levels are high. Almost all students display very positive attitudes to learning and persevere with tasks. They are regularly given responsibility and use it well. A very small minority find it difficult to concentrate when they are required to listen for long periods.

Quality of Teaching and Learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

- A number of very effective strategies characterise almost all lessons. They include sharing learning objectives in writing and revisiting them across the lesson and in a short plenary, good links to previous lessons, high expectations, clear explanations of what is required, quick and simple demonstrations to identify strengths and weaknesses in performance and open questioning that requires students to provide thoughtful responses.
- An outstanding feature of most lessons is the interactive approach that requires students to plan and then implement their own thoughts and ideas. Often tasks demand group discussion and higher order problem solving skills. All teachers are very adept at using students' responses to move learning forward. This approach leads to students' excellent knowledge and understanding of the subject. It builds high self-esteem levels of student engagement.
- Lesson plans are very thorough. Although they identify students with learning difficulties and those with special talents assessment is not regularly used to provide tasks specific to their needs. The level of challenge in lessons for the most able students is sometimes too low.
- There is a good system in place for tracking and recording progress. Students know the level at which they are working and what they must do to progress further.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well to support both theory and practical work.
- Sometimes teachers talk for too long reducing the time for improving skills through repetition. Praise is not always used judiciously.

Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- The curriculum is broad and well balanced. The ten lesson blocks of work throughout Key Stage 3 ensure good continuity in learning and make best use of the limited indoor facilities.
- The school meets the national target for involving students in two hours of high quality PE and school sport in Key Stage 3. It is still not meeting the target for older students. As the school operates a two week timetable

students following the core programme in Key Stage 4 only have PE lessons in alternate weeks.

- The school sport partnership (SSP) programme has had a significant impact in the school. It has helped to introduce the Junior Netball and Junior Football Organiser courses and the Sports Leader Level 1 course. Participation levels are high and students benefit from the arrangement to lead practical sessions in local primary schools. Programmes have also been arranged to support gifted and talented students and students with special educational needs.
- Students are happy to work in mixed gender groups. They provide convincing arguments as to why this approach helps their learning. There is equal access and entitlement to all areas of the programme of study.
- A good number of enrichment opportunities are available at lunch times and after school. However, the breadth of activities is restricted because the school only has one suitable indoor space. Students particularly appreciate all additional opportunities provided; especially inter-form competitions and fixtures against other schools.
- Students on the talent register benefit from the extra-curricular activities provided. The support they are offered is good.
- At present there is no accredited vocational opportunity available for students in Key Stage 4.

Leadership and management of PE

The quality of leadership and management in PE is good.

- Senior leaders value PE and sport recognising the contribution it makes to overall achievement and personal development. They are aware of some shortcomings and are exploring ways forward.
- Leadership of the department is excellent and well supported by a small but enthusiastic and very committed team. Responsibilities are shared and some of the work being taken forward is excellent. Examples include development of the PE web-site and gifted and talented provision.
- The subject leader has a good understanding of the many strengths of the department and works tirelessly to promote high standards. She has very high expectations and sets very challenging targets.
- Although there is a strong self-critical culture that permeates the department there is no regular departmental monitoring and evaluation of lessons or a completed subject self-evaluation document.

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

PE makes a good contribution to the outcomes of ECM.

- The importance of active, enjoyable and safe participation is clearly stated in the aims of the subject and this is central to all that the department does.

- Lessons delivered in a variety of activity areas often include specific work related to health and fitness. Warm ups that involve pulse raising and strength and mobility exercises are part of all lessons.
- Two new units of work have been introduced at the beginning and towards the end of Key Stage 3 with a specific focus on promoting fitness and health.
- Students understand the need for a healthy lifestyle and are aware of the dangers associated with poor diet and lack of exercise. A large number take advantage of the opportunities offered in the extra-curricular programme. However, the school has no data that indicates the percentage of students that are meeting the target for five hours of physical activity in and beyond school.
- Students following the accredited leadership programmes are gaining experiences that could provide for future economic well-being.
- Cross-curricular links with the science department to promote health and fitness as part of the specialist college status of the school have not been fully exploited.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- increasing 'core' curriculum time and providing an accredited vocational opportunity at Key Stage 4
- strengthening systems of self-evaluation to better inform priorities for improved learning and to identify professional development needs
- co-ordinating and enriching the health related fitness programme through closer links with the school specialist subject of science.

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

I Howard Todd
Additional Inspector