

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404040
F 0207 421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



24 October 2008

Mr Worthington
Headteacher
St Michael's CofE High School
Throne Road
Sandwell
West Midlands
B65 9LD

Dear Mr Worthington

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHEE)

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 08 October 2008 to look at work in PSHEE education.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the subject, the visit had a particular focus on economic well-being and information, advice and guidance (IAG).

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, your senior team, appropriate school staff, a large number of outside agencies who work in the school, a group of Year 9 students and another group of Year 11 students, scrutiny of relevant documentation and DVDs, analysis of students' work and observation of five lessons.

The overall effectiveness of PSHEE education was judged to be outstanding.

Achievement

Achievement in PSHEE is outstanding.

- Students have an impressive knowledge of issues relating to sex and relationships education, drug education, leading healthy lifestyles and how to look out for them selves and stay safe.
- By the time students leave the school, they are socially adept, empathise with others, form positive relationships, are able to express opinions and have developed the skills to be assertive.

- Students have a secure understanding of the roles of other support agencies and are confident to access further appropriate information when required.

Quality of teaching and learning of PSHEE

The quality of teaching in PSHEE is good overall.

- The quality of teaching is good overall but inconsistent. Outside agencies have much better subject knowledge than some form tutors and engage students very well in their learning.
- In the outstanding lessons, teachers readily engage in a wide range of challenging activities. Students enjoy the positive relationships with staff and their peers.
- In less successful lessons, the teacher talks too much and lessons are insufficiently broken down into manageable learning chunks.
- At the end of some lessons, teachers do not plan sufficient time to check with students what learning has taken place.
- Assessment of PSHEE is good. The school can clearly demonstrate the progress that students are making.

Quality of the curriculum

The PSHEE curriculum is outstanding.

- A regular weekly lesson taught by form tutors follows a rich and detailed scheme of work that is regularly reviewed and updated to meet the changing needs of students.
- The support provided in and outside of lessons by a very large number of external agencies is exemplary. For example, the school health nurses and Childline representatives. The sex and relationships education curriculum is particularly effective.
- Additional specific themed days such as anti-bullying and enterprise days provide further valuable opportunities for in-depth study.
- Year 6 to 7 transition arrangements are very good at establishing the needs of all students, including those who will require additional support on entry to the school.

Leadership and management of PSHEE

The leadership and management of PSHEE are good.

- A wide range of external agencies are very well co-ordinated to provide high quality support. They share the schools' well communicated vision and commitment to the holistic development of students.
- The leadership of PSHEE empowers staff and students to take risks and develop new ideas and initiatives. For example, the school's performing arts group FUSION developed an innovative performance with Childline.
- The monitoring of PSHEE teaching is insufficiently rigorous to ensure consistency of teaching and learning across the school.

- Training for staff to deliver PSHEE is thorough, regular and meets the needs of individual staff and the changing PSHEE curriculum.

Subject issue: economic well being and information, advice and guidance are outstanding.

- Students report that they receive timely, positive advice and guidance about careers and their future pathways.
- They have ready access to advice and guidance and use the school library and other agencies well for specific research on careers.
- Financial awareness is built into the curriculum and students understand issues relating to their own economic futures and how to avoid debt.
- They develop outstanding social skills and form constructive relationships on work experience placements. Additional themed days and enterprise opportunities re-enforce their understanding of economic issues.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- monitor the quality of teaching and learning in PSHEE in line with the school policy for monitoring other subjects
- improve consistency in the quality of PSHEE teaching.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop PSHEE 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