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Mr Turner
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Dear Mr Turner

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Physical Education

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 29 and 30 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 schools but the individual schools 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 students, scrutiny of documentation and six lesson observations.

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

Achievement and standards

Achievement is good and standards are high.

- From an average starting point students reach above average standards by the end of Key Stage 3, which they maintain at Key Stage 4 and post-16 with impressive A Level PE results. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make the same good progress as others in the school and reach average standards.
- The school produces some outstanding athletes and enjoys success in competitions. This includes four national weight lifting champions, a national golf champion, county cricketers and national representatives in athletics. Overall standards of physical fitness are also high.
- Students develop the four core strands of PE well. Behaviour is exemplary and students' personal development through PE is excellent.

- Students relish the leadership opportunities provided, and the very high participation rates reflect their enthusiasm for, and enjoyment of PE. Student aspirations, self esteem and commitment in PE are high.

Quality of teaching and learning of PE

Teaching and learning are good and promote effective learning.

- Staff use their expert subject knowledge effectively. They encourage high standards and a positive learning ethos among students, who play their part with excellent attitudes to learning. Staff nurture good relationships with students, who thrive under their tutelage.
- Progress was most evident when teachers allowed students to take responsibility for their own learning and provided effective support and guidance. Students enjoy the enthusiastic delivery style and respond positively when information and communication technology is used to further enliven teaching. However, students' focus shifted on the rare occasions when they were kept inactive for long periods.
- Assessment practice is good overall. Parents receive good quality feedback on their child's development and achievements. Thorough initial assessment allows staff to group students by ability and regular tracking and evaluation helps to verify students' progress. Whilst good examples of peer and self-assessment were observed during the inspection, this was not consistently the case. There is no formal assessment of core Key Stage 4 provision so these pupils have no record of their achievement during the Key Stage.

Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is outstanding overall.

- Provision is broad, and balanced. Good primary links and the Year 6 summer camp promote a smooth transition into Year 7.
- Accreditation opportunities are widening and in addition to GCSE and A Level PE the school has recently introduced BTEC Sport to meet the needs of more vocationally oriented students.
- Key Stage 3 students receive two hours of PE, while core Key Stage 4 provision is capped at one hour, which is below the government recommendation. In the sixth form, Year 12 receive one hour PE provision, while Year 13 can opt for a range of sports.
- Students have good opportunities to partake in PE and sport beyond the curriculum. The schedule includes competitive and leisure based activities, as well specialist provision for target groups. There are sports days, inter-form competitions and trips abroad, made possible by an active team of staff from across the school.
- Students enjoy leading during lessons, and all GCSE students follow a level 1 leadership course. Club links are also strong and give students a pathway for continued development. However, provision for girls in the sixth form is limited. PE facilities support curriculum delivery well.

Leadership and management of PE

The quality of leadership and management is good.

- The impact of leadership and management is evident in the profile of PE and the good progress students make during their time in the school. The subject leader is hard working and organised. The department runs smoothly on a day to day basis because he is well supported by a team of talented teachers who share his ambition and work effectively together. Raising standards further and increasing participation are high priorities.
- Planning is mostly good, although the core Key Stage 4 scheme needs reviewing. The available accommodation and resources are deployed well and the subject leader has an accurate view of strengths and areas for development. Staff receive good professional development opportunities.
- The department has the capacity to deliver further improvements to the provision and overall effectiveness of PE in the school.

Subject issue - PE contribution to the outcomes of ECM, particularly being healthy

- The schools arrangements to promote ECM outcomes through PE are good. Standards of physical fitness are high and students adopt healthy lifestyles readily. They are proud to represent the school and/or work as young leaders in partner primary schools. They cooperate well and are acquiring key skills such as a desire to succeed, resilience and working as part of a team.
- Students achieve well, participate enthusiastically and have a good understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe during physical activity. The department is starting to mentor gifted students and provide extra support for less able students, through its innovative 'fitter futures' scheme.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- reviewing Key Stage 4 schemes of work, time allocation and core assessment
- involving all students more in their own assessment
- expanding enrichment opportunities for girls in the sixth form.

I hope these observations are useful as you work to develop PE 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

John Young
Her Majesty's Inspector