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Mr C Elstone
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Dear Mr Elstone

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 04 November 2008 to look at work in PSHEE.

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 students and staff, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of students' work and observation of three lessons.

The overall effectiveness of PSHEE was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

Achievement is good.

- Students make good progress in their personal development because of the school's focus on developing positive attitudes and values.
- Students know how to stay safe and healthy and are involved in delivering key messages to their peers.
- Students are encouraged to take an active part in school developments, including through the School Council's 'Every Child Matters' committee.

- The sixth form student leadership team are actively involved in the life and work of the school.

Quality of teaching and learning of PSHEE

The quality of teaching is good.

- Resources are well used, including in the teaching of personal finance, stress and mental health issues, assertiveness and domestic abuse.
- Good support is provided if teachers lack security in teaching sensitive issues such as contraception.
- Procedures for assessment are developing well, and include self and peer assessment. The outcomes of assessment are used to plan future work. However, regular assessment is not built into every unit of work.
- The school's virtual learning environment is developing well with the dissemination of the programmes of work for the weekly tutorials.
- The school makes good provision for students to learn about the issues alongside their parents and carers.

Quality of the curriculum

The PSHEE curriculum is good.

- The Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) materials are well used so they build on and enhance the values of the school.
- SEAL learning objectives are made explicit alongside the learning objectives for PSHEE.
- The school holds the Healthy School Award which is having a positive impact on PSHEE provision.
- Visitors are used well. for example, in explaining to students how to say 'no' to pressure and the workshops on the dangers of alcohol.
- The excellent displays of good practice on being safe and healthy ensure that these issues are given the highest profile.
- Students have good access to 'expert' advice through the smoking cessation clinic and other 'drop in' sessions.

Leadership and management of PSHEE

Leadership and management are outstanding.

- The subject is very well organised so that students and teachers are clear about the objectives for lessons.
- Teachers are provided with excellent planning.
- The subject benefits from the amount of time given to it, alongside the school's provision for citizenship and tutorials.
- Staff are very well qualified. Several teachers hold the 'Certificate in PSHEE', while the teaching assistants have expertise in areas such as counselling and mediation.
- One of the reasons the SEAL programme is successful in the school is because of the manner in which students, governors and staff were involved in its planning.

- Subject leaders have a very good understanding of the needs of the students.
- The procedures for quality assurance are excellent. They include annual self-review and regular checks of books, lessons, homework and marking.
- Managers are assessing improvements in SEAL outcomes in other subjects.

Subject issue: economic well-being and information, advice and guidance (IAG)

Provision is good.

- The school holds the IAG quality mark in recognition of its work.
- Provision for the development of students' economic well-being is made explicit, as it is for their personal well-being.
- As a result of successful collaboration, sixth formers benefit from an extensive range of vocational and academic subjects from which to choose.
- Students have good access to impartial advice and guidance through the effective links with the Connexions service.
- As a result of its specialist status, students are able to gain work experience in France.
- Students gain good awareness of the world of work through practically based exercises such as 'Fast Tomato'.
- The school has an effective and improving approach to this area of its work.

Area for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- ensure that all the strands of PSHEE are assessed.

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

Henry Moreton
Additional Inspector