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Dear Mr Horsley

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Physical Education (PE)

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit to look at work in 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 lesson observations. I also evaluated the quality of the facilities and resources available to PE.

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

#### Achievement and standards

Achievement is satisfactory overall and students reach average standards.

- Assessment data shows that from broadly average starting points on entry to the school students make satisfactory progress and reach standards in line with national expectations by the end of Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. However, fewer than usual reach Level 6 or gain an A\* or A, particularly girls. Lesson observations confirmed this picture for most students, including those with additional or special educational needs.
- The school has enjoyed some success competitively, particularly in football, with some former students joining professional clubs.

Students' acquisition of the four core strands of PE is suitable, although at GCSE they exhibit better practical skills than knowledge and understanding.

- Students' personal development through PE is good. They adopt leadership roles, work in teams and independently, and develop their evaluative and problem-solving skills. Consequently, they are confident, motivated learners. Students' self-esteem is enhanced by frequent praise and recognition of their successes and progress by department staff.

### Quality of teaching and learning of PE

Teaching and learning in the lessons observed was satisfactory overall, with some good features.

- PE staff are knowledgeable and hardworking. They plan and deliver a range of enjoyable activities, which usually engage students. Focused tasks, positive feedback and helpful advice enable students to learn satisfactorily. A positive feature of teaching is the good relationships built with students, who in turn respect staff and feel well supported.
- In the best lessons students thrive in the dynamic and challenging environment created. They display creativity, focus on high quality outcomes and use their evaluative skills to improve their own performance. Consequently, their progress is rapid. Less successful aspects of teaching included inconsistency in the degree of challenge, student engagement and match of content to student needs and capabilities. Enhanced monitoring and coaching procedures have been recently introduced to improve the impact of teaching.
- Assessment practice is satisfactory overall, but requires improvement. There are issues with the reliability of initial tests and the reporting of progress against targets. In addition students in Key Stage 4 core PE, receive no assessment of their attainment during the Key Stage.

### Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory.

- Students study four of the six National Curriculum areas in Key Stage 3, and two in depth at Key Stage 4. There is also a fitness strand. But, there is an imbalance in the time allocated to games at the expense of the other activities. Students in Key Stage 3 receive two hours of PE, while those in Key Stage 4 get one hour, which is below government recommendations. Students can opt for GCSE PE and gain officiating and coaching experience through an 'in house' sports leaders programme. The school has considered introducing a vocational qualification in PE.
- Extra-curricular options include sailing, alongside more traditional options. In addition there are inter-form competitions, an annual outdoor pursuits trip, as well as optional adventure holidays. Primary links via the school sports partnership and school club links are strong and support transition well. There is an inclusive ethos in both the curriculum and extra curricular programmes. Provision for students with additional needs is a good aspect of the department's work. Units

of work were recently altered and have improved continuity in learning. PE facilities generally support curriculum delivery well, but the school has rightly identified the need for refurbishment of the sports hall and all weather areas, which require urgent repair.

## Leadership and management of PE

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory.

- The hard working and committed head of PE assures the department functions satisfactorily and resources are deployed well. Her impact is increasing as she comes to terms with the full extent of her remit. She is well supported by her colleagues and senior management.
- Departmental organisation is sound overall, with systems and structures which draw heavily on whole school policies. There is room for improvement however, in the clarity of PE specific strategic planning. Quality assurance of the department is in its infancy, although the action plan does recognise some shortcomings.
- The head of PE has been successful in making PE popular in the school but inconsistencies in students' achievement and standards need to be addressed. A start has been made and students' performance improved significantly in 2008.
- Appropriate professional development for staff keeps them up to date with developments in the subject.
- The developments noted above demonstrate the department's capacity to improve.

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

- PE makes a sound contribution to the development of ECM outcomes. Students thoroughly enjoy their lessons and are achieving in line with expectations. Because of the strong relationships staff cultivate with students, in and outside of the formal curriculum, they help them to improve their social, emotional and physical health and well-being.
- Involvement in PE enables students to develop high self esteem and important key skills such as cooperation, determination and effective communication. They participate in wider school life by representing the school and assuming leadership roles. They also acquire a sound grasp of safe practice for themselves and others during PE lessons.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- raising achievement, particularly among more able girls
- give further consideration to the introduction of a vocational option into Key Stage 4
- establishing a reliable measure of students' skills on entry to the school
- providing core Key Stage 4 students with a sense of their achievement in PE during the key stage
- increasing the core PE time at Key Stage 4, in line with government recommendations.

I hope my observations are useful as you work to develop PE in the school. A copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

John Young  
Her Majesty's Inspector