

05 February 2009

Ms P Griffin
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Griffin

Ofsted survey inspection programme – physical education (PE)

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 21 January 2009 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 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 pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' reports, observations of four lessons and other physical activities.

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

Achievement and standards

Achievement is good.

- Children come into the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) with physical skills which are well below expected levels. They make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes because provision for their physical development is good. On entry to Year 1 the physical skills of a majority are in line with the expected level, although a significant minority are still below average.
- Progress continues to be good in Key Stages 1 and 2. The school's assessment records show that the standards attained by Year 6 pupils in 2008 were broadly average. Attainment was better in games and athletics than gymnastics; assessment outcomes were not recorded for dance.

Standards in swimming are below average but the progress that pupils make in their two terms of swimming in Years 3 and 4 is good. Although 'top-up' swimming sessions were available last year, these were not attended.

Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

- Four lessons were observed during the inspection; all the lessons were organised well and followed a suitable structure. Teachers' planning was detailed and focussed on clear learning intentions and identified success criteria. Teachers involved pupils in recalling their previous learning at the start of the lesson and in recapping what they had learned at the end. Suitable equipment was selected and used to support learning and teaching assistants were deployed well, giving good support to individuals and groups of pupils. Pupils had good opportunities to develop and apply their skills. All the teachers had high expectations and pupils' attitudes and behaviour were very good.
- Good clear explanations and some demonstrations helped pupils appreciate what they were aiming for in their responses but insufficient emphasis was placed on showing pupils how to achieve high quality outcomes in the gymnastics lessons. Teachers questioned and observed pupils well to assess their responses but there was less emphasis on pupils undertaking their own evaluations. Good attention is paid to reminding pupils about safety in PE and all lessons begin with a warm-up, although some of these could be more vigorous. The subject leader acknowledges that teachers' use of information and communications technology in PE lessons is underdeveloped.

Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- Pupils have two PE lessons each week. This is supplemented with twice daily brain-gym sessions so that the curriculum time allocated to physical activities meets the recommended two hours. All areas of learning are included in the long term plan for PE, with swimming in Years 3 and 4 and outdoor and adventurous activities in a residential visit undertaken by Year 5 pupils. Accommodation is very good with two well equipped and spacious halls available for indoor PE lessons. There is also ample playground space and a grassed area for outdoor activities. The school has a good range of games equipment some of which is used by pupils at lunchtimes.
- Older pupils have the chance to attend after school netball, football and dance clubs. Pupils from different year groups also take part in a number of sports festivals organised by the local sports partnership. The school enters teams of boys and girls in local netball, football and athletic competitions. A close check is kept on who attends enrichment activities to ensure that pupils from all groups are included. The subject leader acknowledges that provision for extra-curricular activities could be extended further to include a wider range of sports and more intra and inter school competitions.

Leadership and management

The quality of leadership and management is good.

- The subject leader manages the subject efficiently. Under her leadership the school has achieved the Activemark and Healthy Schools accreditation in the last two years. The school's involvement in the local sports partnership has been used well to develop provision and improve outcomes for pupils. The subject leader has evaluated the quality of provision with the school sport coordinator and has identified aspects which require improvement. Training has been organised for staff to develop their skills in teaching aspects of PE, such as athletics. The sports coordinator has also worked alongside individual teachers to strengthen their subject knowledge.
- Senior leaders give the subject leader good support and ensure that any improvements made to provision are sustained. The subject leader has completed some informal monitoring activities which contribute towards writing an annual subject evaluation for the headteacher. She acknowledges that a more formal system is required for assuring the quality of provision.
- A useful transfer record is completed for each pupil and sent to the partner secondary schools to help ensure a smooth transition into Key Stage 3.

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

- Pupils' involvement in physical activities is making a good contribution to their outstanding personal development. All pupils participate well in lessons and individuals are provided with targeted support to ensure that everyone is included. Fitness sessions have been introduced in Year 6 to help improve pupils' strength and stamina. Pupils who are talented at sport are identified and some extend their skills in community sports clubs.
- There are good opportunities through the curriculum and at lunchtime for pupils to be active and the daily brain-gym sessions help to improve concentration and coordination. Pupils interviewed were able to explain why taking exercise is an important part of adopting a healthy lifestyle. They also knew that there are other contributory factors, such as eating a balance diet. Older pupils undertake leadership responsibilities acting as play-leaders for younger pupils; this is something that they are proud to do and manage extremely well.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- strengthen the systems of monitoring and evaluating provision and tracking achievement in PE by undertaking regular observations of lessons and keeping a check on pupil's attainment and progress
- consider making greater use of information communication technology in PE lessons for modelling and assessment
- use any available 'top-up' swimming resources to increase the proportion of pupils who leave the school able to meet the National Curriculum swimming standard.

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

Rob McKeown
Her Majesty's Inspector