

03 February 2009

Mr P Wickert
Headteacher
Holy Trinity CofE Secondary School
Crawley Buckswood Drive
Gossops Green
Crawley
West Sussex
RH11 8JE

Dear Mr Wickert

Ofsted survey inspection programme – physical education (PE) and citizenship

Thank you for your hospitality and co operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 19 and 20 January 2009 with Scott Harrison HMI to look at work in PE and Citizenship.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the subjects, 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 in PE and Citizenship included interviews with staff and learners, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of students' work, observation of seven PE lessons and extra-curricular activities.

Physical Education

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

Achievement and standards

Achievement is good overall.

- The vast majority of students make good progress because of the quality of teaching and are working at or above the expected standards in Key Stage 3 and core Key Stage 4 lessons; in a few areas standards are well above those expected, for example in basketball and

volleyball. An exceptional aspect of students' skills is their use of the 'evaluate and improve' strand of the National Curriculum.

- GCSE and A level results are average but have been on an improving trend. Standards seen in lessons indicated this trend is continuing.
- A small number of students attain individual national success, for example in swimming and badminton. The school basketball teams are particularly successful in national competitions and hold the world record for continuous play.
- Students identified as gifted and talented have good opportunities to access additional activities in lessons and external programmes and successfully act as role models and coaches for others in the school.
- Students have outstanding opportunities for personal development through PE. Older students act as highly effective coaches and ambassadors for sport. Students' leadership and teamwork are of high quality in all activities observed. The house sports prefect initiative is extending leadership skills further.
- All students are very positive about their experiences in PE; they all enjoy the subject and this is reflected in high participation rates in lessons and extra-curricular activities. Behaviour in and around the PE working areas is exemplary.

Quality of teaching and learning of PE

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall with outstanding elements.

- All PE staff have good subject knowledge and in some areas it is outstanding. In the vast majority of lessons this is used well to plan work suitable for different ability levels and for timely intervention to bring about improvement in the understanding and production of high quality performance. Because staff and students enjoy positive relationships, students are challenged and supported to achieve their best.
- Staff use a good range of teaching methods to meet the needs of all students. Reference to learning objectives, success criteria and cross reference to other areas of work are strengths in the majority of lessons. At times there is too much teacher talk missing the opportunity for student engagement and input.
- Staff make good use of information and communication technology (ICT), especially in examination classes. Students have good opportunities to observe DVD clips to help them understand a topic, for example reaction times in an A level lesson, or performing a front drop in trampolining. They also have good opportunities to film each others' performances for analysis and improvement. Occasionally the DVD clips are too long or of insufficient clarity to support students' progress fully.
- Assessment and tracking procedures are secure for all students in the school, although there is a missed opportunity to separately assess students' leadership and teamwork skills. All students know how well they are achieving and how to improve further. Procedures have been successfully adapted for Year 7 to reflect changes introduced with the revised National Curriculum.

Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- Only students in Years 7 and 8 have access to two hours of physical education in the curriculum. Although high numbers attend extra-curricular activities there is a minority of Key Stage 4 students who do not participate and so do not meet the government's aspiration of two hours physical education and school sport.
- The curriculum is broad, balanced and offers an exciting range of activities. Students have good opportunities to work in ability groups, mixed and single gender groups and to choose activity pathways in core Key Stage 4 lessons.
- Although students are able to study either GCSE PE or dance, several girls commented that they would have liked the opportunity to study both.
- Staff have recently initiated the sports leaders award.
- The range of extra-curricular activities has been extended well to take account of students' suggestions such as aerobics, dance and gymnastics. Students comment favourably on the large number of opportunities for inter-school and inter-house competitions.
- Good links have been created between PE and specialist status subjects, particularly in science, with sharing of teaching modules in examination classes.

Leadership and management of PE

The quality of leadership and management is good overall.

- The head of department has recently been promoted to another post in the school; however because of the high quality of policies and procedures and the delegation of responsibilities, the department has continued to run smoothly on a day-to-day basis.
- The department's action plan is linked well to whole school initiatives and all PE staff had input to agree priorities; as a result staff work well together to ensure successful implementation of the plan.
- Members of the department know their strengths and weaknesses well because of secure monitoring and evaluation activities. Good practice is shared through team meetings and observing each others' work during lessons and extra-curricular activities.
- Staff have good access to professional development to improve both subject knowledge and teaching skills. The recent focus on assessment for learning is reflected in the range of teaching approaches observed in lessons.
- Facilities have improved over the last couple of years with the new sports hall and dance space and the school has well advanced plans to improve outdoor provision further with a multi use games area. Resources have increased through school sports partnership funding of trampolines and links with a local table tennis club.

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

- PE makes a good contribution to the outcomes of ECM. The curriculum includes specific units of work on health and fitness and the extra curricular programme has been effectively changed to encourage even higher levels of participation. Students have a good understanding of leading healthy active lives.
- Good attention is paid to ensure that all students are safe in lessons and enrichment activities.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- finding ways to increase further the number of students in Years 9 to 11 that participate in two hours of physical education and school sport
- finding ways to formally assess students' leadership and teamwork skills
- sharing further the good practices identified within the department for greater consistency of provision.

Citizenship

The overall effectiveness of citizenship was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

Standards and achievement are uneven but good overall.

- Students' knowledge and understanding is patchy. For example, Year 7 students demonstrated good understanding of aspects including democracy, rights and responsibilities and voting. Year 9 students were less secure in these areas but showed strengths in discussing justice and the law.
- Written work tends to take the form of summary exercises but occasionally, as in an assignment on the justice system, writing is more thoughtful and extended. Some unusually creative work has been completed, including some on the subject of genocide that was successful in a national competition.
- Participation in a wide range of activities specifically or more broadly related to citizenship are a strong feature of provision in the school. These include volunteering and taking action in the school and community and at regional and international levels. It is impressive that all sixth formers are required to take part in citizenship activity as part of their broader experience and this yields notable benefits for themselves and others.
- Available evidence suggested that citizenship courses are inclusive.

Quality of teaching and learning

No citizenship lessons were observed but available evidence suggested that teaching and learning are of good quality.

- Students talked about their citizenship lessons with considerable enthusiasm. They value the opportunity to discuss topical citizenship issues and take part in debate.
- Students said that they enjoyed opportunities to work together as a class or in groups to research topics, produce posters and presentations, and offer and defend their views.
- They particularly liked the fact that citizenship content is 'new' to them and is seen to have direct relevance.
- Lesson plans confirm that teachers use a wide range of approaches to citizenship teaching although work in books suggests that the written element is sometimes closed, mainly completing summary activities in workbooks.
- In general homework is not set in citizenship and this limits the depth of what can be achieved and the possibility of using resources such as ICT.
- Steps have been taken to assess work in citizenship but this is still at an early stage with no formal assessment at the end of some units. The use of assignments informed by teachers' day to day assessment of students in Year 9 points the way towards a workable system.

Quality of the curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory with good features.

- The curriculum is satisfactory rather than good because the central topics of government and politics are currently lightly treated and there is not yet a distinctive and progressive curriculum for both Key Stages 3 and 4.
- A scheme of work for citizenship is evolving. There are detailed plans for series of lessons but the overview needs to be more closely linked to National Curriculum objectives, showing the relationship between the range of content, concepts and processes.
- Some individual units have appropriate range and depth.
- The citizenship programme, sharing a timetabled lesson per week with PSHE, provides sufficient time for a reasonable citizenship core, but as shown above, some areas are treated too lightly. More explicit contributions from other subjects could alleviate the pressure on the time available in the core programme while at the same time demonstrating their recognition of the revised National Curriculum aims for their subject.
- The citizenship programme is complemented by a very wide range of activities undertaken in assembly, by houses, in student councils and in extra-curricular activities. Campaigning to raise funds for identified groups is a particular strength.
- The school council provides experience of democracy in action and has good status in the school.

Leadership and management

The leadership and management of citizenship are good.

- School leaders value citizenship and have ensured that it has a secure place in the curriculum by restructuring the school week, as well as being manifest in the broader life of the school.

- The subject leader has successfully developed a core programme, supporting the large team of teachers with suitable lesson plans and resources while also encouraging innovation. However, because teachers have first call on their time from their main subject departments, they have been unable to meet regularly as a team.
- Steps have been taken to develop an assessment system using the new eight level scale, although this is at an early stage.
- Training and resources have been made available to support citizenship development.
- The work done to develop citizenship and the commitment and enthusiasm of those responsible for it suggest good capacity to improve.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- continue to review the curriculum in Key Stages 3 and 4 to ensure due weight is given to key topics and to build in progression
- in developing the curriculum and the new assessment arrangements, create more opportunities for enquiry and written communication in depth, possibly making more use of homework
- continue to develop subject expertise through team working and the use of available training, such as the DCSF funded citizenship certificate course.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop physical education and citizenship 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

Judith Rundle
Her Majesty's Inspector