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Mrs Clark
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Dear Mrs Clark

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Physical Education (PE)

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during the visit by Judith Rundle HMI and me on 30 March 2009 to look at work in PE.

As outlined in the initial letter you received, 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 pupils, scrutiny of documentation, and six lesson observations. We also observed a range of lunchtime and after school PE activities.

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

Achievement and standards

Achievement is satisfactory overall but standards are below national averages.

- From below average starting points on entry to the school pupils make satisfactory progress and reach standards below national expectations. A small number of pupils reach higher standards, with some gaining county trials, particularly in cricket. There is no marked difference in the attainment of boys and girls. Lesson observations and the school's own assessment information confirmed this picture for most pupils, including those with special educational needs.
- PE makes a good contribution to most pupils' personal development. They build their self-esteem and confidence by taking responsibility as

sport representatives which has helped shape PE provision, by adopting leadership roles during lessons and in work with partner primary school children. Pupils' team working and communication skills are also actively promoted through PE. Pupils' success in PE is celebrated through a newsletter and achievement certificates.

Quality of teaching and learning of PE

Teaching and learning in the lessons observed was satisfactory overall.

- PE staff have good subject knowledge and work hard on behalf of the pupils who say they are approachable and this usually helps them to develop good relationships with pupils.
- Planning is satisfactory and at times teachers adopt different learning styles to engage pupils, including problem solving and teacher directed approaches. The best teaching encouraged pupils to think creatively, use their initiative and analyse their own and others' performance for improvement resulting in good focus on refining techniques and strategies and applying acquired skills appropriately.
- Less successful aspects of teaching included a mis-match of activity to pupil needs and capabilities, some poor attitudes to learning which raised health and safety concerns and the learning time wasted at the start of some lessons, which affected the quality and pace of learning.
- Assessment practice is satisfactory overall, but requires further refinement. There is no formal assessment of Key Stage 4 pupils and Key Stage 3 assessment is not moderated to ensure reliability. The school does not receive transfer information on pupils' prior attainment in PE and assess pupils on entry using a series of core tasks.

Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory.

- Pupils experience a range of games and more creative activities such as gymnastics and trampolining, designed to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills in PE. However, a disproportionate amount of time is given to games at the expense of the other activities. Pupils in Key Stage 3 receive two hours of PE, while those in Key Stage 4 get one hour, which is below government recommendations. Pupils can opt for officiating awards and some receive coaching experience through an 'in house' sports leaders programme. Currently, units of work are not long enough to promote in-depth learning and understanding. The department does not run GCSE PE and/or BTEC Sport courses.
- There are a number of extra curricular opportunities available to pupils including weight training, boxercise and outdoor and adventurous activities, alongside more traditional games options. In addition there are inter-form competitions and events provided by external coaches. Primary links via the school sports partnership and school club links are developing and are leading to improving pupil standards in PE. After consulting PE representatives the department introduced some new activities which have increased participation and enjoyment rates among pupils. An 'aim higher' group targeted at disinterested girls has been particularly effective. PE facilities are generally fit for purpose and

support curriculum delivery well. The department also makes use of partner facilities locally, such as a swimming pool.

Leadership and management of PE

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory.

- The committed head of PE and head of boys' PE work hard to ensure the department functions smoothly on a day-to-day basis and that resources are deployed well. This new combination of leadership is improving the quality of PE provision, albeit from a low base and it will take some time before they are operating at maximum efficiency. The head of PE has been particularly successful in making PE more popular among girls, but inconsistencies in pupils' achievement, behaviour, and in teaching need to be addressed if pupils are to reach their potential.
- Departmental organisation draws heavily on whole school procedures and is sound overall. Improvement planning is well conceived and leaders are aware of many of the key weaknesses. Quality assurance within the department is in its infancy. For example the head of department has not been specifically trained in lesson observation or data analysis. Further support from senior management would facilitate faster improvement in the department's overall effectiveness.
- Staff have had training to keep them up to date with developments in the subject, but more needs to be done to support the head of department with specific leadership and management training. Capacity to improve further is satisfactory.

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

- PE makes a positive contribution to the development of ECM outcomes. Most pupils enjoy their lessons and achieve satisfactorily. Good relationships between staff and pupils underpin effective development of pupils' social, emotional and physical skills.
- Participation rates are high, as is pupils' awareness of the benefits of health and exercise. Pupils also develop a range of key skills such as organising and planning through PE. Some pupils participate in wider school life by representing the school in competitions and assuming leadership and coaching roles. They also gain a sound grasp of safe practice for themselves and others during PE lessons.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- accelerating pupils' progress by using a wider range of teaching and learning strategies and ensuring teaching is pitched at the right level to enable pupils to achieve well
- making better use of curriculum time and introducing longer units of work, to consolidate pupils' knowledge and skills and deepen their understanding of key processes and concepts in PE
- improving the poor attitudes to learning of a minority of pupils, whose behaviour on occasion raised health and safety concerns

- providing the head of department with additional support to improve the overall effectiveness of PE and further develop her own leadership and management skills through professional development.

I hope our 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