

03 February 2009

Mrs C Taylor  
Headteacher  
St Bedes RC Primary School  
Kingsway  
Thompson Street East  
Durham  
DL1 3ES

Dear Mrs Taylor

Ofsted survey inspection programme – physical education (PE)

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 22 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 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 my judgements included interviews with staff and pupils, scrutiny of documentation and lesson observations. I also visited your Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) unit to observe the range of activity and provision for physical development and to speak with the nursery manager.

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

#### Achievement and standards

Pupils make good progress and their attainment is in line with expectations.

- Pupils make very good progress during EYFS and all of them achieve six or more points for physical development. However, the school does not maintain a clear overview of pupil progress beyond EYFS which makes it difficult to substantiate your view of pupils' standards and achievement. Key Stage 1 and 2 lesson observations found attainment to be broadly average, but confirmed pupils are making good progress towards meeting the attainment targets for PE.
- All pupils reach the Key Stage 2 standard for swimming earlier than expected and a minority of pupils excel in athletics and football, going

on to become elite performers. The school also enjoys success in local competitions. Pupils acquire the four core strands of PE with no marked difference in boys' and girls' progress.

- Pupils' social and emotional development through PE is excellent. They are confident, disciplined and have very good attitudes to learning. Pupils work effectively in groups and are acquiring sound evaluative skills. They are competitive, but understand 'fair play'.

### Quality of teaching and learning of PE

Teaching, although variable, is good overall and facilitates good progress.

- Most staff use an enthusiasm and interest in sport and PE as a catalyst to learn more about the subject. Their enhanced understanding and knowledge base, together with good guidance from the coordinator, enables them to teach the subject successfully.
- Pupils enjoy learning in PE because lessons are interesting and they gain a sense of achievement. Staff usually place the emphasis on high quality outcomes, give regular positive feedback and demand full commitment. In the best lessons information and communications technology is used well to enrich the learning experience and staff tailor their teaching style to the learning needs of individual pupils. Staff create challenging and engaging problems, which pupils take great pleasure in solving. For example, asking Year 2 pupils to "give me a compass bearing for the way I am facing to catch this ball". Because they feel well supported, pupils experiment and push their own boundaries. This leads to accelerated progress.
- There is no formal monitoring of the quality of PE teaching across the school, and there is variability in staff confidence and expertise to deliver the subject. Parents receive feedback on pupils' effort and attitude, but reporting on progress and future targets is inconsistent.

### Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is excellent.

- Wide-ranging and balanced curriculum provision supports pupils' good progress. This is complemented by an outdoor and adventurous residential visit, after school clubs, and events organised through the school sports partnership. These activities include leisure based as well as competitive options. There is also sports specific coaching. Support staff train as play leaders to help with lunchtime activities. Staff have identified pupils without a club link and are now trying to engage them.
- Curriculum planning is thorough and well conceived including a pilot core skills component, 'Brain Gym' and 'Activ8' activities. There is a focus on honing pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills in PE, but they have not lost sight of the core need to provide exercise and improve pupils' fitness. However, there is further scope for pupils to assume leadership role. PE facilities, including good EYFS play areas, support curriculum delivery well but the junior yard is of poor quality.

### Leadership and management of PE

The quality of leadership and management is good.

- The dynamic subject leader, ably supported by two like-minded PE enthusiasts in the school, ensures PE functions effectively in the school. Scrutiny of action plans and discussions with this team reveal they have a very good strategic awareness of how current provision can be improved further. Staff feel well supported by you and the team and have benefited from PE specific training and guidance.
- Coordination of the subject is very good, with all requirements and recommendations met or exceeded. For example, in light of the recommendations of the interim Rose Review the subject leader has embarked on establishing meaningful cross-curricular links to consolidate pupils' understanding of geography, science and English.
- The subject leader is focused on raising standards and promoting the high quality outcomes for PE and is ensuring the curriculum evolves appropriately to support this aim. He makes good use of available resources and there are plans to improve further the quality of PE facilities. There is good capacity to promote further improvement.

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

- PE provision in your school contributes to ECM outcomes well. A focus on excellence and enjoyment, underpinned by a desire to develop pupils' health and fitness in its widest sense, and your commitment to promoting fair play, teamwork and camaraderie epitomise the rationale for PE in your school. Your 'Activemark' award shows your success in widening PE participation. Improving school dinners and educating pupils and parents about healthy eating has also paid dividends in improving pupils' understanding of healthy lifestyles.
- Pupils are taught how to use PE equipment safely and to treat each other with care and respect. During PE, pupils acquire key skills such as problem solving, which will support their future economic well-being. In PE pupils develop their inter-personal skills. They take pride in representing the school in events and volunteering as PE monitors.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- ensuring assessment procedures provide a clear view of pupils' progress
- introducing formal monitoring and evaluation of the impact of PE teaching and eradicating inconsistencies in teaching quality
- improving the quality of outdoor facilities for Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils.

I hope my observations are useful as you continue 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