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Mrs Richardson
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Richardson

Ofsted survey inspection programme – personal, social and health education (PSHE)

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 06 February 2009 to look at work in PSHE.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the subject, the visit had a particular focus on;

- how the PSHE curriculum meets the specific needs of pupils in your local area, and how progress is tracked and assessed; and
- the contribution made by PSHE to the future economic well-being of your pupils.

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 you and the deputy headteacher, discussion with pupils from Years 5 and 6, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of two lessons, one assembly and part of a school council meeting.

The overall effectiveness of PSHE was judged to be satisfactory.

Achievement

Pupils' overall achievement in PSHE is satisfactory.

- Pupils' personal development is sound. They enjoy their work and value PSHE lessons. Pupils are articulate, confident and they readily express their views.

- Pupils' behaviour is generally good, although at times, when they have to listen for too long, some become talkative and easily distracted.
- When given the opportunity, pupils readily undertake responsibilities, such as being 'playground buddies', but in some lessons, they are too passive and do not think for themselves.
- Pupils know the importance of eating five fruit or vegetables daily, but they do not fully understand the meaning of a balanced diet.
- Older pupils have a good knowledge of the dangers of tobacco, alcohol and other drugs. They are less clear about the changes that occur whilst growing up and their understanding of relationships is not fully developed.
- Pupils have completed some good work to help them understand emotions and how to stay healthy, which have made a positive contribution to their literacy.
- Although there are many chances for pupils to use skills, such as teamwork and discussion, there are missed opportunities to develop these skills through progressively more challenging lessons.

Quality of teaching and learning of PSHE

The quality of PSHE teaching is satisfactory.

- Relationships between teachers and pupils are trusting and positive. Adults provide positive role models for boys and girls.
- Lessons often provide opportunities for discussion, which pupils enjoy and helps maintain their interest in PSHE.
- Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' progress.
- Occasionally, as seen in one lesson, the pace of learning slows at times and expectations are too low because questions narrow the focus of pupils' thinking, so limiting pupils' achievement.
- Sometimes, the lesson focuses on the task rather than the learning, so while pupils are busily engaged, there is some confusion about what they are learning.
- Teachers do not always plan sufficient differentiation of tasks to fully meet all pupils' needs, so some pupils do not achieve as well as they might.
- There are informative reports to parents, at the end of the year, but there are insufficient assessments, so pupils' progress is unclear.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly, but comments do not clearly indicate how pupils can improve.
- Pupils are well supported and they feel very safe and secure at school.

Quality of the curriculum

The PSHE curriculum is satisfactory.

- The PSHE curriculum is improving. There is a good range of work on the importance of healthy eating, regular exercise and developing pupils' understanding of emotions.
- The scheme of work no longer reflects the work being taught and there needs to be greater consistency of coverage in the school.

- The school is making full use of the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning materials (SEAL), which are not integrated into the school's scheme of work for PSHE.
- The planning for skills' development, for example, teamwork, or strategies for resisting peer group influence, is also underdeveloped.
- The school has achieved the Healthy Schools Award and this has had a positive impact on pupils' attitudes towards healthy eating and exercise.
- There is a good range of trips, visitors and after-school clubs that help pupils stay fit and healthy. Throughout the life of the school there is a wide variety of opportunities for pupils to develop their independence, for example organising their own clubs.
- Pupils are included well in opportunities around the school, for example, school productions, that help develop their confidence.

Leadership and management of PSHE

The leadership and management of PSHE are satisfactory.

- The recently appointed subject leader is enthusiastic and is well supported by senior leaders.
- Policies, such as sex and relationship education, and drug education do not give sufficient guidance on teaching and learning.
- There is some confusion between PSHE, SEAL and citizenship and this has led to some misunderstanding about the content and teaching of PSHE.
- There is insufficient monitoring of PSHE through pupil assessments and observation of lessons.

Subject issue: economic well-being

Pupils' preparation for adult life is satisfactory.

- Pupils' self-confidence, their readiness to offer opinions and the way they undertake responsibilities are good.
- Pupils work together well and listen respectfully to each other's views.
- Despite the many opportunities around the school, pupils' independence in lessons is not always fully developed.
- Pupils are learning to take some responsibility for the school environment through the work of the school council and the eco council.
- The school places a high priority on pupils' views and gives real areas of responsibility, such as organising and running stalls for Family Fun Day.
- Visitors to the school provide a good insight into the world of work, for example, First Aid training by para-medics.
- There is some good work on budgeting, but not enough on managing personal finances.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- reviewing the scheme of work for PSHE and ensuring it includes sufficient opportunities for pupils' skills and independence to be developed
- developing more assessment tasks
- developing the monitoring of teaching to ensure that all lessons in PSHE are good.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop PSHE 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

Sue Orpin
Additional Inspector