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09 March 2009

Mrs D Gare
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Dear Mrs Gare

Ofsted survey inspection programme – physical education

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 06 February 2009 to look at work in physical education (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 learners, scrutiny of relevant documentation and observation of four part-lessons.

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

Achievement and standards

Achievement is outstanding.

- Pupils achieve exceptionally well and attain standards that are above the national average. In some areas such as games and dance, standards are exceptionally high.
- Pupils get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage, where good quality teaching coupled with the care and support provided by teaching assistants allows them to enjoy themselves and create their own movement ideas. Many of the fundamentals are established at this early stage, for instance moving safely in a confined space and describing why it is important to warm up before exercise.

- The highest standards were seen in Years 5 and 6, where the benefits of two hours of PE each week, regular participation in an extensive enrichment programme and the high priority given to healthy eating can clearly be seen.
- Boys and girls achieve equally as well as each other but girls' dance is better than boys because they know how to time their movements to the music. Setting of pupils into groups for games in the afternoons allows the less able and most vulnerable pupils to participate in activities where they feel comfortable, fully included and can enjoy some success.
- The majority of pupils meet expectations in swimming by the end of Year 4, however the parents of the few that do not are asked to enrol the children on a swimming course at the local sports centre.
- Personal development and well-being is outstanding. Pupils thoroughly enjoy PE, describing it as 'their favourite subject'. Participation rates in lessons and extra-curricular activities are very high. They enthuse about the annual 'sports week' and residential visits in Years 4 and 6.
- Pupils behave exceptionally well. They cooperate fully with teachers and each other because they enjoy what they are doing and feel included in group work. For example, during a Year 5 dance lesson it was evident that pupils had worked together in small groups over a number of weeks to choreograph a short dance motif before performing it for the rest of the class.
- They eat healthily at breaks and lunchtimes and comment favourably on the food provided by the 'cool café' that they helped to design.
- A distinctive feature of the school is the high proportion of pupils who volunteer as 'buddies' for younger pupils, play activity leaders (PALS) to lead playground games at breaks and lunchtimes, and young sports leaders who teach and coach others. The pupils observed leading a dance session over break-time were exceptionally good.

Quality of teaching and learning of PE

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

- Teachers use a detailed set of lesson plans to help them to deliver lessons that are enjoyable, generate high activity rates and provide opportunities for pupils to plan and evaluate their own learning. Short term plans are better for games than gymnastics and dance but most teachers show confidence in these areas and are willing to demonstrate movements and ideas for the pupils to copy.
- Time to plan their work in small groups allows less confident pupils to work with others of similar ability and feel engaged in their learning.
- Clear and coherent assessment and recording procedures, modelled on assessments made in other subject areas are both manageable and understood by all staff. The subject leader is currently investigating the use of core tasks developed by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), but these are not yet fully integrated into established assessment procedures.

Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is outstanding.

- Excellent PE facilities are used well to deliver an exemplary programme of PE, complimented and reinforced by an extensive enrichment programme.
- All pupils receive two, one-hour lessons each week, an indoor gymnastics or dance lesson taught by teachers and an outdoor games lesson taught by teachers and external sports coaches.
- An exemplary feature of the curriculum is the way that games lessons for older pupils are timetabled together in the afternoons. This allows pupils of different interests and abilities to be grouped together and matched with specialist coaches. Less able pupils spend time securing basic skills through 'multi-skills' activities and, at the same time more able pupils are challenged to attain high standards through intensive coaching in several different sports.
- Teachers and coaches combine to offer an outstanding array of enrichment activities. Large numbers of pupils arrive in school at 8 o'clock to join dance, fitness and martial arts activities led by specialist coaches. Break and lunchtimes include less formal dance and playground games led by young leaders. After school sports clubs run every night each week include a multi-skills club for Key Stage 1 pupils and mini-games and inter-school fixtures for older pupils.
- All pupils take part in at least one enrichment activity, and the wealth of activities throughout the school year ensure that the school exceeds national expectations for participation within and outside of the curriculum.

Leadership and management of PE

The quality of leadership and management is outstanding.

- PE and sport enjoy a high profile in the school because senior leaders, including governors, recognise the importance of regular participation in exercise and eating healthily so pupils can grow up healthily, enjoy learning and achieve well.
- PE is very well led by an experienced and knowledgeable subject leader. She has engendered the enthusiasm and commitment of other staff and provided them with good quality guidance to support their teaching and assessment of pupils in PE. She coordinates the work of teachers and a large number of external coaches.
- Self-evaluation is accurate and informs improvement planning well. Good partnerships with the school sports partnership and the local authority ensures that the school is well-placed to benefit from training opportunities and new initiatives. Capacity to make further improvements is outstanding.

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

- The school holds the Activemark and Healthy Schools awards, but its efforts to ensure that PE contributes towards pupils' 'being healthy' goes much further than this. The emphasis on regular exercise and healthy eating allows pupils to develop a thorough understanding of what is good for them, what is not and helps to inform their choices. An illustration of the school's commitment to this outcome is the inclusion of the subject leader in the senior leadership team and the allocation of a teaching and learning responsibility allowance to raise and maintain the profile of a healthy lifestyle in the school. This is exceptional in the primary phase.
- The subject leader has researched why certain pupils do not engage in extra-curricular sport and identified those pupils who are currently, or at risk of becoming obese. These targeted pupils have been encouraged to attend early morning activity sessions, followed by a healthy breakfast before the start of school. This has had some success in helping pupils to see the difference physical activity and sensible eating can make. One week in the summer term becomes the annual sports week, where pupils participate in sport, learn about healthy lifestyles in other lessons, and enjoy sports day. To promote healthy eating, Key Stage 1 pupils and those eligible for free school meals receive free fruit at break-times and older pupils bring their own healthy snacks.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- integrating QCA core tasks into existing assessment procedures
- strengthening short-term lesson planning for gymnastics and dance.

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

John Mitcheson
Her Majesty's Inspector