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Dear Mr Roff

Ofsted 2008-09 subject survey inspection programme: citizenship

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 30 and 31 March 2009 to look at work in citizenship.

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

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 various groups of students, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of students' work, observations of four lessons and a school council meeting.

The overall effectiveness of citizenship was judged to be good.

#### Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are satisfactory in Key Stage 3, good in Key Stage 4.

- Students have achieved well in particular aspects of the programme of study, for example in their study of aspects of human rights and Britain's diversity; and in citizenship assessments of work undertaken in geography on responses to globalisation. The work of students in Year 7 showed good achievement in the key area of parliamentary government, reflecting a revised curriculum.

- However, pupils in Year 9 have gaps in their knowledge and understanding of key areas of the curriculum.
- In Key Stage 4 all students study the citizenship short course, with 62% gaining A-C grades in 2008, above the national average, although weaker than the school's results in recent years.
- Students in Key Stage 4 demonstrated good knowledge and understanding of key areas of citizenship such as parliamentary government, justice and law and Britain's diversity.
- The school's analysis of the data shows some underachievement on the part of lower attaining pupils, particularly boys; this was associated with negative attitudes to citizenship lessons on the part of some pupils; there was some evidence of this in my inspection.
- Key Stage 4 students on ASDAN certificated courses provided evidence of their effective participation in a community project.
- Members of the school council were highly effective in determining priorities and action on issues derived from the school's implementation plan.

### Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching in lessons observed was good.

- Lessons observed were characterised by good planning, very effective classroom management and facilitation of discussion, involving all pupils. The subject knowledge of citizenship teachers involved in the world studies programme was very good.
- Citizenship is taught by a large number of teachers and the school's own monitoring and my discussion with students suggests that, while resources are generally good, the quality of teaching is very uneven.
- Teachers now make periodic assessments using the newly introduced eight level scale. Evidence from assessments made this year shows that this is successful in several respects. Assessments are providing evidence across a range of objectives and are supporting the setting of targets so that students know what they need to do to improve.

### Quality of the curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory.

- The curriculum is in transition as the school responds to issues identified in its own evaluation and arising from the revised National Curriculum.
- The use of the citizenship short course for all and ASDAN certification for some students provides a substantial curriculum in Key Stage 4, with citizenship linked to the short course in Philosophy and Ethics.
- In Key Stage 3 a cross-curricular approach has had some benefits but the school has correctly identified significant issues. The curriculum is now evolving as the humanities subjects make a more substantial contribution to the development of a core citizenship programme.
- Students have additional opportunities to take responsibility and leadership roles. The school council demonstrates effective discussion,

action and accountability but is not yet a fully democratic model in the election of all its members.

## Leadership and management

The leadership and management of citizenship are good.

- The school has given careful thought to the place of citizenship and has an accurate view of the quality of provision.
- The subject leader is confident in her role and has excellent subject knowledge. This is demonstrated in the innovative work being undertaken in assessment using the eight level scale and the principles of 'Assessing Pupils' Progress'.
- The school has very good capacity to improve its citizenship provision.

## Subject issue: assessment

- Assessment of citizenship is good, with a system newly in place to establish targets and provide data to track pupils' progress.
- Sample assessments are well conceived and demonstrate students' achievement in the concepts and processes of the National Curriculum.
- These assessments were well marked with good feedback to students.
- GCSE coursework assignments are fit for purpose and enable students to demonstrate their skills in citizenship. More attention could be given to displaying the accompanying contextual knowledge and understanding.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- continuing to implement and evaluate the revised Key Stage 3 curriculum, ensuring that there is a sufficient core programme in place, accompanied by a consolidated scheme of work for citizenship
- continuing to improve the consistency of teaching
- continue to encourage and support the school council in determining how it can model and improve democratic processes.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop 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

Scott Harrison  
Her Majesty's Inspector