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Mr D Stanley
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Stanley

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Personal, social and health and economic education (PSHEE)

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

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the subject, the visit had a particular focus on the provision of information, advice and guidance (IAG) and the contribution made by the subject to the future economic well-being of your students.

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 discussions with staff and students, scrutiny of relevant documents and observation of three lessons.

The overall effectiveness of PSHEE was judged to be satisfactory.

Achievement in PSHEE

Achievement is satisfactory.

- Students' personal development is satisfactory.
- Students have good understanding and awareness of the issues around drug education, including alcohol and smoking.
- Students have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of sex and relationship education.
- Students know how important it is to keep fit, and value the varied physical activities available to them. For example, older girls enjoy the chance to practice yoga.

- Students have a good understanding of the opportunities available to them after they leave school.

Quality of teaching and learning of PSHE

The quality of PSHEE teaching is satisfactory.

- The scheme of work provided to teachers enables them to plan suitable activities, including opportunities for students to work collaboratively.
- The quality of learning is inconsistent because of teachers' confidence in teaching the various strands of the subject.
- Arrangements for assessing the learning of students in the different strands of the subject are not rigorous enough.
- Teachers of subjects such as drama and childcare make a good contribution to students' learning in PSHEE related areas.
- Students value the visiting 'experts' who provide specialist guidance in key aspects of the subject.
- Parents and carers are not made aware of students' achievements in all strands of the subject.
- Effective support is provided for vulnerable students, including by the well-qualified and experienced pastoral and support team, so they benefit from PSHEE activities.

Quality of the PSHEE curriculum

The curriculum is good.

- Students' teamworking skills are developing well.
- The school has achieved the Healthy Schools Award and students value the quality of food provided before school, at break and lunch times. As a result they have a good understanding of how to eat healthily.
- Students value the developing opportunities to learn alongside others through, for example, the 'team learner' programme.
- The well-being course for Year 8 and the enterprise activity for Year 9 are strong aspects of the school's provision.
- Students with learning difficulties and disabilities are involved in all PSHEE related activities, and are well supported in the Learning Support Unit.
- More able students can take a GCSE General Studies examination which complements their learning in PSHEE.
- The school plans its curriculum well to meet the needs of students, but does not know enough about PSHE provision in the feeder primary schools in order to tailor the programme more precisely.

Leadership and management of PSHEE

The leadership and management of PSHEE are good.

- Self-evaluation is accurate as a result of good monitoring of provision, teaching and learning in the subject.

- The school's effective use of the National Workforce Remodelling Agreement is underpinning provision well in the subject.
- Effective use is made of visiting 'experts' to provide advice, guidance and support on issues such as drugs education.
- The training and deployment of teachers over time is inconsistent.
- New technologies are well used by staff to access relevant planning and materials, and to assess and record students' attitudes to learning in the subject.

Subject issue: IAG and economic well-being

Students are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

- School managers have a good understanding of the needs of local employers.
- Good work experience opportunities are provided to students.
- Opportunities for students to develop their enterprise skills are good, especially through the focussed activity towards the end of Year 9.
- Good use is made of computers so that students' information and communications skills are improved.
- The school's focus on 'Learning to Learn' is having a positive impact on the development of students' workplace skills.
- Students have developing understanding of how to work with others.

Areas for improvement in PSHEE, which we discussed, included:

- ensuring the quality of teaching and learning is consistent
- ensuring students' progress in all strands of the subject are assessed.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop PSHEE in the school.

As explained in the 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

Henry Moreton
Additional Inspector