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Dear Mrs Mackenzie

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Physical Education (PE)

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 18 and 19 May 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 the judgements included interviews with staff and students and scrutiny of documentation, including samples of Key Stage 4 work. The nine lessons observed were restricted to Key Stage 3 as Year 11 had external examinations and Year 10 were completing work experience. During the inspection wet weather conditions and the sports hall being used for exams meant staff had to teach larger joint groups.

The overall effectiveness of PE was judged to be satisfactory with some good aspects. The impact of more recent appointments, initiatives and new management within the subject is not yet fully reflected in the achievement and attainment of students in PE for all age groups.

Achievement and standards

Students make satisfactory progress and reach average standards overall.

- Students start the school with average standards and their attainment is broadly average by the end of Key Stage 3. Core Key Stage 4

attainment is not assessed, but a small cohort of students achieve above average standards in full course GCSE PE. Standards in GCSE Dance and short course GCSE PE are below average. Lesson observations completed during the visit confirm broadly average standards and progress.

- Students are securely acquiring the four core strands of the PE National Curriculum with little difference between boys and girls.
- School teams compete locally and regionally with some success and some students are outstanding, including a British Acro gymnastics champion and students registered with premier league football clubs.
- Students' personal development through PE is good overall. Participation rates in lessons and in extra curricular activities are usually high and attitudes to learning are generally positive. Students are confident and take an active role in school teams, extra curricular activities and relish the leadership opportunities available through the Sports Leader Award, Sports Council and the Duke of Edinburgh award. Pupil successes in PE are celebrated during assemblies and in a newsletter.

Quality of teaching and learning of PE

The quality of teaching and learning observed was satisfactory overall.

- Most students respond well to the friendly, enthusiastic and well-planned approach of staff. Students make satisfactory progress against lesson objectives and are motivated to learn. Staff are knowledgeable and work hard to provide students with appropriate opportunities to improve and consolidate their PE knowledge, understanding and skills.
- A minority of teaching is exemplary and captures students' imagination. Learning is made fun and students enjoy being challenged to extend themselves and take responsibility for their own learning. As a result they are creative and show sound problem solving skills. However, this is not the norm and the quality of teaching and learning is variable.
- Poorer aspects of teaching included lapses in attention to health and safety and a poor match of content to students' specific needs. At times, staff attempts to accelerate the pace of learning were nullified by low level disruption and interruptions to restore order and discipline.
- Students assess their own and others work and staff have begun to track pupil progress at Key Stage 3. Feedback to parents focuses on pupils' attitude and effort in the core, and on progress for those taking GCSE PE or Dance.

Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory with some good features.

- The curriculum meets requirements, offering students a range of PE experiences. GCSE PE and Dance are options, alongside the sports leadership award. A vocational option is not in place. For students taking GCSE PE, non traditional activities such as horse riding, archery and a 'high adventure event' are available. However, core provision is

heavily skewed towards games based activities and does not give students extended opportunities to develop key competences and skills through other activities.

- Key Stage 3 and GCSE students get at least two hours of PE weekly but core Key Stage 4 students receive one hour, which is below government expectations. Schemes of work are broadly suitable but need updating to reflect the latest changes to the National Curriculum.
- Provision is enriched by activities organised through the school sports partnership, local club links and a varied and well attended after school club programme, that have helped the department gain the Sportsmark award.
- The school has a range of PE accommodation much of which requires upgrading, but nonetheless supports curriculum delivery.

Leadership and management of PE

The quality and impact of leadership and management is satisfactory.

- New leadership has great potential but is still coming to terms with the full extent of the remit. The profile and students' enjoyment of PE has been successfully raised and PE runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis.
- Planning is sound overall and leaders are aware of strengths and weaknesses. Importantly the subject leader has the backing of senior leaders, which will be crucial in securing the necessary improvements.
- The subject leader is expected to carry out her managerial duties from the standard allocation of time afforded all staff. To her credit she monitors and evaluates aspects of provision periodically. She is focused on raising standards further. This however, is not yet fully reflected in consistently good teaching, learning and attainment within the department.
- The use of assessment to accelerate learning is an area yet to be fully exploited. Available resources are well deployed and there is good capacity to improve further.

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

- Arrangements to promote inclusion through PE and to support the outcomes of ECM are very good. The school holds the Sportsmark and healthy schools awards and promotes students' social, emotional and physical well-being effectively by working closely with community groups, partner primary schools, the school sports partnership and local council.
- Participation in PE and sport, health awareness and community cohesion activities are high. Provision of healthy food, safety training, leadership awards and key skills development, alongside unusual activities like cheerleading and BMX racing support the outcomes of ECM well. Consequently students enjoy and make progress in PE.
- Support for students with learning difficulties and/or a disability is good, and the staff from the PE department liaise closely with the disability development officer. Students are usually well integrated into

lessons and/or receive specialist one-to-one support and guidance. Similarly the school has worked hard to engage groups of students 'turned off' by traditional PE.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- evaluating pupil progress and standards throughout the school
- increasing the time given to non-games activities and raising all core PE time to two hours, in line with government expectations
- eliminating the inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning
- improving the quality of facilities to support curriculum delivery further.

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