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Mr D Hampson
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Dear Mr Hampson

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHEE)

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on Tuesday 28 April 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 economic well-being and information, advice and guidance (IAG).

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, your vice principals, staff involved in PSHEE, scrutiny of relevant documentation, discussion with three groups of students, observation of three lessons and a house tutor session.

The overall effectiveness of PSHEE was judged to be good with some outstanding features.

Achievement

Achievement in PSHEE is outstanding.

- Students develop excellent social skills. They are polite, confident, and interact well with adults. Sixth form students are mature, responsible and act as good role models in the school.

- Standards in related examinations at Key Stage 4: 'Preparation for Working Life', and 'Certificate in Enterprise and Employability' are outstanding. All students pass both qualifications.
- Students have good knowledge of sex and relationships and drugs education.
- PSHEE contributes significantly to raising the expectations and aspirations of all students. Vulnerable students in particular are well supported through the academic support programme. As a result, students make significant progress.

Quality of teaching and learning of PSHEE

The quality of teaching and learning in PSHEE is good.

- Teachers plan for a good range of activities in lessons that are well-matched to students' needs.
- In the best lessons, a wide range of questioning strategies are well used to promote extended answers and involve all students.
- Good teacher/student relationships are established in all lessons. As a result, students are confident to contribute to lessons and express an opinion.
- Learning objectives in lessons are currently too broad to lead to specific, measurable outcomes.

Quality of the curriculum

The PSHEE curriculum is outstanding.

- The PSHEE curriculum is very broad and includes accredited GCSE courses such as 'Preparation for Working Life' and 'Certificate in Enterprise and Employability'.
- Personal development and service to the community are key attributes of the curriculum. As a result of their involvement in the various community activities, students grow in maturity and independence.
- Academic tutoring is highly effective and tailored to individual students' needs to enable all students to access the whole PSHEE curriculum.
- Good use is made of external agencies such as theatre companies and local public services.

Leadership and management of PSHEE

The leadership and management of PSHEE are good.

- The industrious and dedicated curriculum leader for PSHEE has worked hard to develop and promote a very wide curriculum that encompasses accredited courses that also support the school's specialist status.
- He leads a team of teachers well, some of whom are non-specialists and part-time in the department.
- The scheme of work for PSHEE is thorough, detailed, well-resourced and well-mapped throughout the school. However, learning objectives are not sufficiently clear within individual units of work.

- PSHEE action planning is currently too generic and lacks measurable outcomes.

Subject issue: economic well-being and information, advice and guidance

Economic well-being and information, advice and guidance are outstanding.

- The strong focus through the Business and Enterprise specialist school status is having a major impact on the attainment of all students.
- Financial capability and enterprise activities have a high profile in the school, and success in a number of accredited courses, significantly support the development of students' economic well being.
- The gold standard award in 2008 for Information, Advice and Guidance is highly justified. Students in all year groups receive appropriate and timely advice according to need through the effective academic support programme. Students' excellent social skills, prepare them well to take their place in society.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- ensuring that all PSHEE lessons have clear and measurable learning objectives
- ensuring PSHEE action planning identifies specific and measurable targets for improvement.

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

Clive Kempton
Her Majesty's Inspector