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Mr R Sawyer
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Sawyer

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 19 and 20 May 2009 to look at work in PSHE education.

As outlined in the 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 observations of five lessons and a tutorial.

The overall effectiveness of PSHE education was judged to be good.

Achievement in PSHEE

Achievement is good.

- Students' personal development is good, and they have positive attitudes towards the subject.
- Students develop respectful relationships with others.
- Students have a good knowledge, understanding and awareness of the issues around sex and relationships and drug education, including alcohol and smoking.
- Students have a good understanding of how to eat healthily.

- Students know how important it is to keep fit and they value the many opportunities the school's sport specialism provides.
- Students of all abilities hold strong views but are sometimes reluctant to express their opinions and participate fully in lessons.
- 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 teaching is good.

- In the lessons and tutorial seen, girls and boys of all abilities were attentive and excellently behaved because of the good relationships with teachers. Some students were not keen to discuss and reflect on issues.
- Teachers of subjects such as religious education, business, history and design and technology make a good contribution to students' learning in PSHE education.
- The contribution made by physical education (dance) lessons is outstanding because clear and explicit links are made to improving students' social and emotional skills.
- Assessment in the subject is satisfactory. The arrangements for assessing students' work and recording their progress in all strands of the subject over time are not robust.
- Students value the dedicated 'curriculum days' because they like to spend some time on specific aspects of the subject.

Quality of the PSHE education curriculum

The curriculum is good.

- The Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) materials are used well with younger students to provide an interesting range of activities.
- The school benefits from its involvement with the 'Working with Food' Trust and accreditation for the Healthy School Award is actively being sought.
- Students learn about the international dimension through the well established links with a school in Uganda.
- Students with learning difficulties and disabilities are involved in all PSHE education related activities, including through tailored provision to meet their specific needs.
- Vulnerable students and groups of students are excellently supported to develop their personal and social skills through the intervention programmes such as 'repair and build' and 'rainbows', and the specialist support staff.

Leadership and management of PSHE education

Leadership and management of PSHE education are good.

- Self-evaluation is generally accurate.

- The school is reflective about how the subject contributes to outcomes.
- The school's new pastoral structure underpins provision in the subject.
- School leaders undertake rigorous monitoring of the work of the form tutors, which includes self-review.
- Effective use is made of the excellent programme of visits and visitors to provide opportunities for personal development.
- Opportunities are missed to develop links in the subject with the feeder primary schools.

Subject issue: Information advice and guidance (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. They provide good work experience opportunities, as well as developing vocational courses.
- Skills for working life are well developed. For example, students routinely send and receive work via email and extensive use is made of the school's virtual learning environment (VLE).
- Opportunities for students to develop their enterprise skills are good.

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

- ensuring all strands of the subject are assessed and progress over time is recorded.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop PSHE education 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