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Mrs H Jeffery
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Dear Mrs Jeffery

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 30 June and 01 July 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, some of your staff, students from Key Stages 3 and 4, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of students' work and observation of three lessons and one form tutor period.

The overall effectiveness of PSHEE was judged to be good.

Achievement

Students' overall achievement in PSHEE is good.

- Students' personal development is excellent and they are exceptionally confident, caring and welcoming.
- Students eagerly express their views, listen to each other and know that their opinions are valued.
- Students are making good progress in their social skills and in their understanding of how to keep safe, for example, through drug education or sex and relationships education

- Students enjoy learning PSHEE, especially through days when the timetable is suspended, which provide a wide variety of interesting activities.
- Some aspects of students' knowledge are slightly less well developed, for example, the meaning of a balanced diet and the importance of exercise.

Quality of teaching and learning of PSHEE

The quality of PSHEE teaching is outstanding.

- Relationships between teachers and students are positive and purposeful.
- PSHEE lessons use relevant topics, such as a Year 9 class who were discussing family relationships or a Year 10 group who were considering ethical issues related to consumer products, so students are interested and focussed on their work.
- Occasionally, the objectives for the lesson are unclear so students' motivation and rate of work decline.
- The care and support for students are outstanding, so students feel very safe and that adults listen to them.
- Assessment is at an early stage and while there are some good examples in the Economic Awareness course, there is not enough information to show how well students are progressing in all areas of the subject.

Quality of the curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory.

- The curriculum is enriched extremely well by an interesting range of activities provided on the days when the timetable is suspended. These cover a wide range of topics and include such areas as interview days, health days and personal finance days. These events make excellent use of a wide range of visitors and outside agencies.
- The lack of a discrete lesson for PSHEE means that some areas of the curriculum are less well covered than others and that progression is less clearly planned.
- Other subjects contribute to PSHEE, but students are not always informed about what they are learning and why.
- There has not been enough consultation with students and parents to ensure that the curriculum is securely planned to meet students' needs.

Leadership and management of PSHEE

The leadership and management of PSHEE are satisfactory.

- There is a shared understanding of the value of PSHEE, but the importance of planned progression within the programme is not fully appreciated.
- Suspended timetable days are carefully planned and evaluated.

- There is no formal programme for monitoring PSHEE. There is no overall scheme of work or mapping of PSHEE provision to identify gaps or areas needing development.

Subject issue: economic well being and information, advice and guidance (IAG)

Students are prepared for adult life in an outstanding way.

- There is an excellent programme of careers education, which extends throughout the school.
- The Economic Awareness course helps students to understand about business and enterprise well. Students benefit from excellent opportunities to learn how to manage their personal finances, including a very effective school bank.
- The IAG provided by the school are extremely good and make very effective use of external agencies.
- Subjects across the curriculum make a good contribution to students' understanding of the workplace.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- developing more assessment tasks for PSHEE
- ensuring that PSHEE is monitored to identify strengths and areas for development.

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

Susan Orpin
Additional Inspector