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14 December 2009

Mr S Emsley
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Emsley,

Ofsted 2009-10 subject survey inspection programme: personal, social and health education (PSHE)

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 24 November 2009 to look at work in PSHE.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of PSHE, the visit had a particular focus on learning to stay safe.

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.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included: interviews with you, the PSHE coordinator, governors, parents, staff and two groups of Year 6 pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; observation of four PSHE lessons, an assembly, the daily physical exercise, a string ensemble, one of the family groups and a nurture group.

The overall effectiveness of PSHE is satisfactory.

Achievement in PSHE

Achievement in PSHE is good.

- Pupils have good social skills. They are polite, readily engage with known visitors in conversation and are proud of their school.
- The family-group session of pupils from Reception to Year 6, who meet twice a week, has significant impact on pupils' personal and social skills. Older pupils look out for and care for younger children, who in turn look up to the older role-models. Pupils develop skills of empathy, leadership, and team work.

- Pupils' knowledge of sex and relationships and drugs education is not as secure as their social skills.
- Achievement in the specialist nurture group for excluded boys is exceptional. Boys make tangible progress in their confidence and self-esteem.

Quality of teaching of PSHE

The quality of teaching and learning in PSHE is satisfactory.

- Teachers plan a range of appropriate and engaging activities for PSHE lessons. Pupils are provided with some good opportunities to work together and share ideas that develop good social skills.
- The learning objectives in PSHE lessons lack sufficient clarity and are often expressed as broad aims. As a result, pupils do not always make enough progress with their learning.
- In too many lessons, teachers talk too much at the expense of pupil learning. Opportunities to assess learning are often missed during the lessons.

Quality of the curriculum in PSHE

The quality of the PSHE curriculum is satisfactory

- The taught PSHE scheme of work has recently been updated to include sex and relationships education, drugs education and citizenship. These new developments have not had sufficient time to have a positive impact on outcomes.
- The broader PSHE curriculum across the school has a strong emphasis on developing pupils' social skills. For example, regular residential trips develop strong skills of responsibility and independence. Parents report how their children have grown up as a result of these annual visits.
- The family-group curriculum is rich and very successfully gets pupils of all ages working together and developing mutual respect.
- The nurture-group curriculum successfully improves the behaviour of the boys and enables them to recognise and manage their behaviour when they gradually re-integrate back into mainstream provision.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in PSHE

The leadership and management of PSHE are satisfactory.

- The PSHE action plan has identified areas for development. However, success criteria to measure the impact of the actions are not sufficiently focused in the plan.
- The PSHE coordinator has started the extended PSHE certificated course. However, there are insufficient opportunities to support other members of staff to enable them to teach aspects of the PSHE curriculum well.

- Currently there has been no opportunity to monitor the teaching of the PSHE curriculum.
- Leaders and managers have an accurate self-evaluation of the overall effectiveness of PSHE and had identified sex and relationships and drugs education as key areas for improvement.
- Curriculum resources for PSHE are currently limited.

Subject issue: learning to stay safe

Pupils report that there has been regular support, for how they can stay safe, through the PSHE curriculum. However, there have not been enough opportunities within the curriculum for them to practise and develop strategies for saying no when offered cigarettes and alcohol. Parents report that the school does a lot to ensure their children are safe at school.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring that all lessons have clear, focused and measurable learning objectives
- developing the PSHE curriculum to include a stronger focus on sex and relationships as well as drugs education
- monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in PSHE lessons.

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