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Mrs C Brammer
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Brammer

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

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 26 November 2009 to look at work in PSHE education.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of PSHE education, the visit had a particular focus on how effectively pupils learn 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, your deputy, the PSHE education coordinator, the special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator, the head of the hearing impaired unit, three parent-governors, three parents, and two groups of pupils. I also reviewed relevant documentation, and observed five PSHE lessons.

The overall effectiveness of PSHE is good.

Achievement in PSHE

Achievement in PSHE is good.

- Pupils are polite, considerate and show concern for others. They have developed good social skills and parents report that their children have grown in confidence and self-esteem, some as a result of the large number of leadership opportunities provided, for example as members of the school council or the eco-council.

- Pupils in the hearing impaired unit make good progress in their social skills. Their integration into the wider school and the local community is exceptional.
- Older pupils have a good knowledge of sex and relationships education and the changes that occur during puberty. Pupils' knowledge of drugs education is less well developed. They have, however, practised strategies for saying no and are aware of the harm that drugs can cause.
- Pupils are aware of how to stay safe and look after themselves.
- They have a good knowledge of what constitutes a healthy diet and active lifestyle. Large numbers attend after-school clubs, including healthy cookery club and many sporting in nature.

Quality of teaching of PSHE education

The quality of teaching and learning in PSHE education is good.

- The quality of teaching and learning is variable. While teachers plan extensively, there is not enough consistency in the challenge of some activities.
- In outstanding lessons, pupils engage well with each other, remain totally focused and use technology confidently to develop their understanding. The teacher consolidates learning throughout the lesson and has high expectations of pupil outcomes.
- Less successful lessons are over-directed by the teacher.
- Relationships in all PSHE education lessons are strong and pupils behave well and want to achieve.
- Assessment is developing in PSHE education and is used well in some classes.

Quality of the curriculum in PSHE education

The quality of the PSHE education curriculum is good.

- The curriculum has a strong focus on the social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL), and is appropriately enhanced with units of work on sex and relationships, drugs, financial capability and learning how to stay safe.
- The large range of after-school clubs extends and enriches the PSHE education curriculum. The Year 6 residential outdoor pursuits visit develops independence and a strong sense of self-belief and confidence.
- The scheme of work for PSHE education is broad and takes account of local needs.
- Limited use is made of external agencies to enhance the curriculum.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in PSHE education

The effectiveness of leadership and management in PSHE education is good.

- PSHE has a high profile in the school and is supported well by the senior staff.
- A clear and revised scheme of work has been devised by the new subject leader with support from the senior management.
- There has been effective whole-school training on the use of SEAL materials and an emotional literacy project with an educational psychologist. All staff, including support staff and other adults in the school, are now more aware of the significance of social and emotional issues and their impact on learning.

Subject issue: learning to stay safe

There are many features throughout the curriculum that develop pupils' skills and awareness in how to stay safe and avoiding situations where there is the potential of them not being safe. Pupils and parents report that the safety of pupils is a high priority in the school.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring that all lessons have a stronger focus on challenging activities that promote active learning
- ensuring that pupils fully understand the dangers that the misuse of drugs, including alcohol and tobacco can cause.

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