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Mr D Francis  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Francis

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 9 and 10 December 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 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 staff, a parent governor, and students from Key Stages 3 and 4; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of students' work; and observation of 11 lessons and one assembly.

The overall effectiveness of PSHE education is outstanding.

Achievement in PSHE education

Achievement in PSHE education is outstanding.

- Students have an excellent knowledge of how to stay healthy, and know about the effects of drugs and alcohol misuse. They apply their knowledge well in their lifestyle choices with the 'quit smoking' campaign being very successful for those students taking part.
- Students have a very good understanding of the need to exercise. They have excellent opportunities to put this into practice. There are high participation rates in sporting activities.

- Students' knowledge and understanding of sex and relationships education are comprehensive.
- Their understanding of how to stay safe is outstanding, both in and outside school.
- Students make exceptional progress in developing their financial capability, through enterprise projects and work on interest and exchange rates. Older students have an excellent understanding of career planning; they have clear aspirations for the future and know what steps they need to take to achieve their plans.
- Many aspects of the school's work contribute to the outstanding achievement in PSHE education. Students are confident and articulate.

#### Quality of teaching of PSHE education

The quality of teaching of PSHE education is good, with some outstanding features.

- Relationships between teachers and students are excellent, leading to high standards of behaviour and a purposeful learning environment.
- Information and communication technology is used well in many lessons and teachers use a range of extensive and stimulating resources to support learning.
- In the outstanding lessons, students made exceptional progress because teachers inspired and challenged students. Well-structured tasks and activities moved students' learning on quickly. Students know exactly what they need to do to improve. There are well-defined learning objectives and outcomes for the lesson. Teachers set high expectations with plenty of opportunities for independent learning.
- The monitoring and recording of students' progress in PSHE education are excellent. All student reports comment on the achievement in PSHE education with clearly defined next steps for improvement.
- The quality of work in the books and quality of marking is variable. There are examples of good practice with excellent peer- and self-assessment and target-setting.
- Planned activities in some lessons do not always meet the needs of different groups and individual students.

#### Quality of the curriculum in PSHE education

The PSHE curriculum is outstanding.

- Planning for PSHE education is outstanding with comprehensive schemes of work for discrete delivery. This is supplemented by detailed mapping of PSHE education across the curriculum.
- There has been a positive impact of the social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) materials which were fully introduced in September 2009.

They ensured a seamless transition for students coming to the school in Year 7 from primary schools.

- The needs of vulnerable groups are met very well by social skills modules for students with autistic spectrum disorders and individual support is tailored well to ensure looked-after children achieve as well as other students.
- Specialist status makes an excellent contribution to the PSHE curriculum through work on healthy lifestyles. Innovative drugs projects have enabled Year 9 and 10 students to build an electronic model of the body for primary and secondary students to show the effects of drugs on the body.

#### Effectiveness of leadership and management in PSHE education

The leadership and management of PSHE education are outstanding.

- PSHE education has a high profile across the school and this is reflected in the high levels of student enjoyment.
- Subject leadership is outstanding. Plans, materials and resources are continually being developed.
- The action plan is very well focused and accurate in its assessment of areas for improvement.
- There is very effective, regular support and professional development for non-specialist teachers to deliver PSHE education.
- Formal monitoring of PSHE lessons does not happen frequently enough.

#### Subject issue: learning to stay safe

- Students report they feel safe at school and know who to turn to if there is an issue. They are confident to report incidents and they know the school will deal with them effectively and sensitively.
- They have a good understanding about how to stay safe during practical lessons. Students learn how to use potentially dangerous equipment in a safe way, and they understand and adhere to the safety rules in science.
- Students have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe, for example in relation to drugs and road safety. E-safety is covered exceptionally well and students' understanding is comprehensive.
- Parents are very confident that safety issues are given high priority and confirm that learning to stay safe is a key focus of the curriculum.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- improving the quality of teaching to ensure that all the lessons meet the needs of different groups and individual students.

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

Davinder Dosanjh  
Her Majesty's Inspector