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Mr K Stewart
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Stewart

Ofsted 2009-10 subject survey inspection programme: citizenship

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 23 November 2009 to look at work in citizenship.

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 and pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; discussion with members of the school council; and observation of four lessons, including the support base for pupils in the early stages of learning English.

The overall effectiveness of citizenship is satisfactory.

Achievement and enjoyment of learning

Achievement and enjoyment of learning are satisfactory.

- Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the key areas of citizenship with some aspects that are good. They have a strong sense of fairness and understand that their actions have consequences. Pupils in all year groups demonstrate a good understanding of their responsibilities within the school community.
- Pupils demonstrate good understanding of the features of democracy. The well-organised school council and the links with local and national politicians have helped to reinforce pupils' understanding of democratic processes.

- Their knowledge and understanding of diversity are good and they show a sensitive awareness of differences in culture and ethnicity, and of the need for respect for others.
- Pupils' oral skills are better than their writing skills. They demonstrate good discussion and debating skills, active listening and turn-taking. However, there are few examples of sustained pieces of writing which reflect their levels of understanding.
- Pupils' knowledge of local and global environmental issues and the role they can play to improve their environment is limited.

Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

- Teachers demonstrate enthusiasm and good subject knowledge. They value pupils' opinions and create a positive climate for learning. Pupils contribute their ideas and opinions confidently; for example, when evaluating the playground environment and offering suggestions to improve it.
- Teachers use information and communication technology well in lessons, although opportunities for pupils to use computers to research topical issues are limited at present.
- Teachers effectively use a range of approaches, including whole-class discussion, role-play, pair and group work. Consequently, pupils enjoy the lessons and engage very well with the teaching.
- Teachers use questioning skilfully to develop pupils' thinking and subject vocabulary; older pupils demonstrated a good grasp of the skills needed to structure a reasoned opinion when presenting conflicting views on football teams.
- The support for pupils in the early stages of learning English is good in the language base and in lessons; this supports their learning well. Discussion is lively and gives pupils good opportunities to develop the confidence to try out new vocabulary, improve their understanding of the language and take part in lessons.
- Assessment of citizenship is based largely on pupils' oral contributions in lessons. There are good examples of teachers assessing pupils' knowledge and understanding and providing helpful feedback. However, the school recognises that practice in systematically monitoring pupils' progress in the subject is not consistent across the key stage.

Quality of the curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory.

- Citizenship themes are planned within the Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education (PSHCE) curriculum. All year groups have regular

citizenship lessons that identify the expected learning for pupils. Themes, such as anti-bullying, are introduced through the planned assembly programme.

- There are good opportunities for pupils to engage in discussion, debate and decision-making in school. However, opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge of local and global environmental issues are underdeveloped.
- Social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) work is well established in the curriculum and contributes to the pupils' good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning.
- The school is in the early stages of planning all the key elements of citizenship into the curriculum and has sensibly planned to tackle this as part of the forthcoming curriculum review.

Leadership and management

The leadership and management of citizenship are satisfactory.

- You and the recently appointed subject leader have a clear view of the place of citizenship within the revised curriculum. Your vision is represented in policy and the wider school ethos.
- There is a strong commitment to help all pupils, including those who are new to the school, to feel part of a cohesive school community and develop the knowledge, understanding and decision-making skills required to make a positive contribution in school. However, planning for community cohesion is in the early stages.
- Sufficient resources have been provided for citizenship; the learning environment is successful in promoting the rich cultural diversity of the school.
- The monitoring and evaluation of teaching, learning and the effectiveness of the curriculum are not specific to the subject. The school is aware that improvement is needed in developing the citizenship curriculum and in the systematic assessment of pupils as they move through the school.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring that the curriculum is planned to include all the key elements of citizenship and provides structured opportunities for pupils to improve their written work in the subject
- developing strategies for assessing pupils' progress in citizenship
- monitoring the effectiveness of teaching and the curriculum on pupils' achievement in citizenship.

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

Pat Walsh
Her Majesty's Inspector