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Mr S Philips
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Dear Mr Philips

Ofsted survey inspection programme – physical education

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 29 September 2009, to look at work in physical education (PE).

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the subject, the visit had a particular focus on the identification of an area of best practice in the subject and its impact for pupils.

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 staff and learners, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' reports and observation of three lessons and other activities.

The overall effectiveness of physical education is satisfactory.

Achievement

Achievement and enjoyment of learning are satisfactory.

- Children come into the school with physical skills that are generally less well developed than might be expected for their age. Outcomes in physical development at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage continue to be a little below the local authority and national means. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stages 1 and 2. Attainment at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 varies from above to below average but continues to remain a little below average overall. This matches the standards reached by pupils in the lessons observed.

- Attainment and progress are not monitored as pupils move through the school. However, assessments made by a partner secondary school for pupils starting in Year 7 show that a significant minority have below-average standards in gymnastics and games.
- Pupils who are talented in physical activities are identified and provided with additional challenges. Less emphasis is placed on supporting those pupils who are low attainers and who may benefit from dedicated programmes to aid their confidence and physical coordination.
- Pupils' personal development and enjoyment of school are enhanced by their participation in PE and sport. Those interviewed in Year 6 could talk about the benefits of taking regular exercise and other important features of adopting a healthy lifestyle. They also knew why it was important to warm up in lessons and could explain the effects exercise has on their bodies. Pupils enjoy being members of the school council physical activity group and this helps them to contribute their ideas to school improvements.

Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is satisfactory.

- There were a number of strengths in the lessons observed. Teachers' planning followed a consistent style and included clear learning objectives and assessment questions to check the success of pupils' learning. Almost all pupils behaved well, showed positive attitudes and cooperated successfully in pairs and groups. Pupils had good opportunities to acquire, develop and apply their skills. Teachers used their own and pupils' demonstrations successfully to illustrate the responses they were looking for. In the dance lessons, several pupils worked imaginatively to produce creative moves in their performances. The work in dance was linked well to learning in other subjects.
- In one lesson, too little emphasis was placed on engaging pupils in an evaluation of their own and others' performances. There were also occasions when lower attaining pupils were given insufficient support to enable them to engage fully in the activities and make better progress. Teachers acknowledge that more use could be made of information and communication technology to support modelling and capture pupils' responses to strengthen assessment. Currently teachers are not carrying out formal assessments of pupils' work in PE or monitoring their progress through the year.

Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- The curriculum is clearly mapped out for each year group and includes all areas of learning. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage take part in a good range of indoor and outdoor activities designed to help develop their physical skills. The school has appointed a learning support assistant to manage the outdoor activities. The local authority scheme of work for

PE is used well by teachers to plan their lessons and this helps to promote good continuity and progression, although this has yet to impact significantly on pupils' achievement. A more creative and stimulating curriculum is being introduced in which learning is linked across subjects; this also includes involving pupils more in outdoor learning. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have the chance to engage in outdoor and adventurous activities during a residential weekend, which is held every two years. Swimming sessions are provided for younger pupils in the school's learner pool and for Year 5 pupils at the local swimming pool.

- Involvement in the school sport partnership programme has increased the range and quality of sporting opportunities available to pupils. Community sports coaches have led a number of different sports activities and these have culminated in pupils attending a tournament or festival at the local secondary school. Pupils also enjoy taking part in a good variety of lunchtime and after school clubs. At lunchtime, one midday supervisor has responsibility for leading and organising play activities. The after-school hip-hop club is very popular with boys and girls of all ages and backgrounds.

Effectiveness of leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management is satisfactory.

- Enthusiasm and a commitment to improving provision are important features of subject leadership in PE. The subject action plan identifies development priorities, including extending opportunities for outdoor physical activity. An informative report is written annually outlining subject developments. Good support is provided for teachers' planning and the extra curricular sports programme is managed well. The sports partnership link has been used effectively to increase sporting opportunities for pupils and to provide professional development for staff, although the dedicated primary link teacher training has been missed.
- Monitoring and evaluation are currently underdeveloped and the subject leader acknowledges that she does not know enough about pupils' attainment and progress, or about the quality of teaching and learning.
- Accommodation and resources are adequate but indoor space for PE, in particular access to gymnastics apparatus, is restricted by the storage of furniture in the school hall. The outdoor play area is suitable for games activities but would benefit from an upgrading of playground markings. Pupils spoke positively about knowing which sports opportunities were on offer to them through school newsletters but the profile of PE and sport in displays around the school is modest.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- strengthening the monitoring and evaluation role of the subject leader in order to gain a clear understanding of pupils' achievements and the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning

- introducing a system for assessing and recording pupils' attainment and progress in PE, including making suitable use of ICT
- sharpening the focus on providing lower attaining pupils with suitable opportunities to develop their physical skills in lessons and in additional activities.

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

Rob McKeown
Her Majesty's Inspector