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Ms M Ashcroft
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Dear Ms Ashcroft

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Physical Education

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 14 October 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 was judged to be satisfactory.

Achievement in PE

Achievement and enjoyment of learning are satisfactory.

- Most pupils enjoy PE and engage enthusiastically in their lessons and club activities. Pupils start school with physical skills which are typical for their age. The Early Years Foundation Stage profile for 2009 reveals a wide variation in attainment in physical development. Almost half the pupils reached a good level but a quarter was below the expected level; the low scores tend to be matched to pupils who join Reception later in the year.

In the lesson observed, in Reception, most pupils had well-developed physical skills.

- Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stages 1 and 2. Although the school is not monitoring pupils' progress from year to year, the subject leader estimates that pupils in Year 6 achieve broadly average standards. Pupils observed in a Year 2 games lesson and Year 6 gymnastics lesson support this evaluation. Achievement is better in games and swimming than in dance and gymnastics.
- Pupils' personal development is enhanced by their involvement in PE and sport. Pupils worked enthusiastically and most showed good attitudes and behaviour. Year 6 pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and how taking exercise contributes to this. Those interviewed were able to talk about how exercise affects their bodies and the importance of safety in PE. In lessons, teachers' discussions with pupils on the effects of warming-up are not sharply differentiated for different age groups.
- Pupils who are talented in PE and sport are identified and placed on the gifted and talented register. They are provided with additional physical challenges through sports partnership workshops and community-club activities. The school also identifies pupils who require additional support with their fine and gross motor skill development who then attend weekly 'gym trail' sessions led by a teaching assistant and managed by the special educational needs coordinator.

Quality of teaching of PE

The quality of teaching is satisfactory.

- The lessons observed were planned well and followed on from evaluations of previous work. Learning objectives were clear and pupils had the chance to acquire, develop and apply their skills. Teachers' use of the local authority scheme of work is helping to improve the overall quality of teaching. In two of the three lessons, the quality of learning and progress was satisfactory but pupils were not reaching the high quality outcomes teachers were aiming for. In one lesson, pupils sat and listened to the teacher for too long. Resources were adapted and matched particularly well to pupils' skills and abilities in the Year 2 games lesson. The support provided by teaching assistants helped to keep individual pupils focused on their tasks.
- Teachers question and observe pupils to assess their performances. In all the lessons, teachers identified good models for pupils to emulate in their own responses. Pupils in Year 6 cooperated well on their gymnastics work and teachers encourage pupils to evaluate their own and each others' responses and suggest improvements. Video clips are used well at the beginning of a unit of work to set expectations and illustrate how pupils might respond. Digital images are also captured in lessons to record what

pupils have achieved. Teachers make more formal assessments of pupils' attainment at the end of units of work but these are not used to monitor progress through the year or from year to year. Reports written for parents provide helpful information on their pupils achievements in PE but not all areas of learning are included.

Quality of the PE curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- All the areas of learning are included in the well-balanced long-term plan for PE. The introduction of a core scheme of work has helped improve teachers' planning and establish continuity in learning. Units of work are delivered in six lesson blocks and this helps to focus teaching more precisely. Pupils have two hours of timetabled PE each week and some lessons are taught by visiting coaches to introduce pupils and teachers to a wider range of activities. Outdoor and adventurous activities are included in residential visits for older Key Stage 2 pupils. Swimming sessions are organised for Years 3 to 6 and this enables most pupils to reach the expected standard before they leave for secondary school.
- The school's involvement in the local sports partnership has brought many curricular benefits. Community coaches work with pupils in lessons and in extra-curricular activities and pupils attend many tournaments and festivals organised by the partnership. Annual training for play-leaders and advice for teachers to support the development of their subject knowledge is also provided. The subject leader has plans to introduce some exciting new clubs this year, such as 'hip-hop' dance and speed stacking to increase participation and attract more pupils to take part in physical activities. Girls' participation has also been successfully targeted to increase their involvement and confidence.

Effectiveness of leadership and management of PE

The effectiveness of leadership and management is satisfactory.

- The subject leader is relatively new to post but has the subject knowledge and commitment to bring about further improvements in provision; priorities for development have been identified. The introduction of the local authority scheme of work has strengthened the curriculum as well as the quality of teaching.
- The subject leader effectively manages the community coaching programme and the links with the local sports partnership. Coaches are observed teaching their first session to ensure the quality of teaching meets school expectations.
- Some observations of PE lessons have been completed recently and these led to some useful points being identified in a subject evaluation report.

Overall, however, monitoring and evaluation has an insufficiently high profile. More efficient use could be made of the primary link teacher days to monitor provision. The subject leader's knowledge of pupils' attainment and achievement is limited and not helped by the absence of a system to monitor progress. The school does not keep a close enough eye on how well pupils are doing in swimming. The profile of PE in displays around the school is modest and could better reflect pupils' involvement and achievements.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- raising the profile of monitoring and evaluation, so the subject leader gains a secure knowledge of the quality of teaching and learning, the standards reached and progress made by pupils
- setting up a suitable system for monitoring attainment and progress in PE, so that pupils who are underachieving can be identified and helped to improve.

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