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Mrs A Creech  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Creech

Ofsted 2009-10 subject survey inspection programme: physical education (PE)

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 17 November 2009 to look at work in 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 transition between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 and the impact on the continuity of pupils' learning.

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' reports and observation of two lessons and other activities.

The overall effectiveness of PE is good.

Teachers' assessments indicate that most pupils in Year 6 are working within the expected level for PE, although attainment varies across the different areas of learning and for boys and girls. Standards in swimming are high with almost all pupils reaching the National Curriculum standard by the end of Year 5. There are also several individual pupils who reach very high levels of performance in gymnastics and games activities. Pupils' involvement in community sports clubs, competitions and extension activities is helping to boost their achievements. While achievement and enjoyment of learning is good for a majority of pupils, the transfer record assessments for pupils who left the school last year show that there is a minority who are working below the expected level for their age and are not achieving as well. Teachers have begun to monitor pupils' attainment and progress at the end of each unit of

work, although this is at the early stages of development and requires extending to demonstrate progress throughout Key Stage 2.

Provision in PE is good overall. Two lessons for Year 6 pupils were observed during the inspection, which were satisfactory. In these, most pupils worked with enthusiasm and positive engagement. Lessons followed a suitable structure, although for some less-able pupils, too little time was devoted to developing their skills before they were asked to apply them in a game. Teachers provided helpful demonstrations to show pupils what they were aiming for in their responses but able pupils could have taken more responsibility for leading, modelling and coaching their peers. Teachers observed pupils to assess their learning and sometimes provided good guidance to help them develop their skills. At the end of both lessons, pupils were encouraged to discuss the outcomes of their learning and make suggestions on how they might improve.

The curriculum plan and scheme of work set out clearly the teaching programmes for all year groups. All areas of learning are included and some sessions are taught by visiting coaches deployed through the sports partnership. Pupils in Year 6 take part in a good range of outdoor and adventurous activities during a residential visit. Most pupils have two lessons of PE each week but pupils in Year 6 currently have just one. Pupils are also involved in 10 minute daily exercise sessions. There is an excellent range of additional sports activities available for pupils in sports clubs, festivals and tournaments. Pupils also talk proudly about the school's many successes in inter-school team competitions. Outdoor accommodation is very good and includes the shared use of the secondary school's multi-purpose games area. There is also a wide range of games equipment available for pupils to use in lessons and at lunchtime. Indoor accommodation in the school hall is adequate, but floor space and access to apparatus are restricted by the storage of resources and furniture.

The school has outstanding subject leadership and is fully committed to providing high-quality PE and sport. There is a clear understanding of the strengths and development areas in the subject, and good links with the school sport coordinator have helped to improve the provision. Helpful guidance has been provided for teachers' lesson planning through a detailed scheme of work, and for the assessment and recording of pupils' attainment. An audit of teachers' professional development requirements has also been completed. Leaders ensure PE and sport have a high profile; curricular activities and pupils' achievements are reported regularly to parents and the community through school newsletters and in the local press. Expectations for monitoring and evaluation are defined clearly but the time given to these is insufficient.

There are a number of effective practices in place to support pupils' transition across the key stages.

- Positive working relationships and open communication have been established at senior manager and subject-leader levels, including work in partnership with the local sports coordinator.

- A very good transfer record, which is completed at the junior school and passed to the PE department in the secondary school, provides teachers of Year 7 with a baseline of National Curriculum attainment from which to make their initial assessments.
- Regular opportunities are provided for pupils to visit the secondary school to take part in sporting events and festivals, including the chance for Year 6 and 7 pupils to work together in a dance performance.
- Older pupils act as positive role models and help to lead and manage sports activities that are organised at the secondary school and clubs that are organised at the junior school.
- Gifted and talented pupils are identified and provided with a range of extension and challenge activities, which are organised through the sports partnership at the secondary school.
- Promising initiatives are being planned, such as an extension of the leadership pathway to include responsibilities which straddle Years 6 and 7.

Areas for improvement in transition, which we discussed, include:

- working with the partner infant school to assess pupils' attainment on entry to Year 3 and record their progress from the Early Years Foundation Stage
- evaluating the effectiveness of the transfer record for pupils moving to Year 7 and assuring the accuracy with which teachers are assessing pupils' attainment in PE
- sharing teaching approaches and curriculum planning to strengthen the continuity of provision between the key stages
- using the expertise available through the sports partnership and the secondary school PE department to provide professional development to boost teachers' subject knowledge.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop PE in the school and transition between Key Stages 2 and 3.

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