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Mrs J McCarthy  
St Nicholas of Tolentine Catholic Primary School  
Pennywell Road  
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Dear Mrs McCarthy

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 26 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 identification of an area of best practice in PE and its impact on 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.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included interviews with staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' reports, and observation of three lessons and enrichment activities.

The overall effectiveness of PE is good with outstanding features.

Achievement in PE

Achievement is good.

- Pupils make good progress in PE from low starting points in their physical development when they join the Early Years Foundation Stage. Progress was good overall in the lessons observed.
- Data held by the school indicate that nearly all pupils reach Level 4 in PE by the end of Year 6, with just over a third reaching standards that are above average, particularly in dance and games. This reflects the standards observed in lessons. The school recognised that not enough pupils were attaining the expected 25 metres in swimming and have taken effective action to tackle this. Pupils identified as gifted and talented are

given additional opportunities through the school sports partnership and are extended with additional activities and roles in lessons.

- Pupils' personal development is enhanced well by their involvement in PE and sport. The pupils interviewed were able to explain the importance of a healthy lifestyle and why it was important for them to be active. Year 5 and 6 pupils have good opportunities to become sports leaders and take the responsibility for working with younger pupils during play and lunchtimes seriously. Pupils have very positive attitudes to the subject and talk with particular enthusiasm about the large number of clubs, festivals and tournaments that are available. A high proportion of pupils chooses to choreograph their own dances for the schools talent show.

### Quality of teaching in PE

The quality of teaching is good overall.

- There were a number of strengths in the lessons observed. Good use was made of information and communication technology (ICT) to share lesson objectives, show video clips of work as a stimulus for movement and to evaluate performances. In most of the lessons, pupils worked at a good pace, although at times pupils were inactive for extended periods of time and therefore did not make enough progress in improving their physical skills. Pupil and teacher demonstrations were used effectively to set high expectations, but the subsequent time given for pupils to practise and consolidate their skills effectively was inconsistent. In the outstanding lesson, pupils worked together extremely well, listened attentively to each other's ideas and persevered to achieve high-quality performances.
- Teachers and teaching assistants generally used observation well to intervene and bring about improvements. Where this was effective, it led to better progress in the quality of pupils' skills, in their understanding of watching performances to feedback and improve performance or working more effectively in small groups. Teachers assess pupils' work throughout the year and use the information and their good subject knowledge well to help plan future lessons. Higher attaining pupils are not consistently challenged in lessons.

### Quality of the curriculum in PE

The quality of the curriculum in PE is good.

- All areas of learning are included in the curriculum with more emphasis recently placed on swimming to enable pupils to reach expectations. Good use is made of a commercial scheme of work to help teachers plan lessons. A different scheme is being trialled that extends further the use of ICT and pupils' opportunities to reflect on their own performances. Pupils have two lessons of PE each week that is supplemented with short brain gym activities throughout the day and good opportunities to be active during play and lunchtimes. The curriculum is supported well with the use of external coaches who teach half the programme.

- The enrichment programme is a strength of the school's work. A broad range of extra-curricular activities are available throughout the year with a high take-up. Dance features prominently within the enrichment programme and pupils thoroughly enjoy trying a rich variety of styles from tap to African dance. Good links are created with local professional football clubs for specialist coaching that has, at times, included work to improve pupils' literacy skills and supported their study during Black History week. The school easily meets the Government's expectation for two hours of PE and school sport each week and is well on its way to attaining the five hour expectation.

## Effectiveness of leadership and management in PE

The effectiveness of leadership and management in PE is outstanding.

- Leaders have an excellent understanding of the strengths and priorities for improvement. Subject leadership has led to a significant rise in the profile of PE across the school in recent years. This includes the introduction of secure schemes of work, improved teaching and broadening opportunities for pupils. Monitoring of provision leads to a secure development plan linked to professional development opportunities. However, evaluations do not always place enough emphasis on the impact on pupils' outcomes.
- The school has been assessing pupils' attainment and monitoring their progress in PE for the last couple of years, which is ahead of most other primary schools in PE. Leaders have good plans in place to strengthen the accuracy and consistency of judgements through moderation. Pupils' wider and successful achievements in PE, such as their leadership or evaluative skills, are not currently included in the assessment process. The school does not exploit the assessment data fully to report to parents and carers about their child's progress in PE.

## Features of best practice

The school employs a play support manager to widen the opportunities for pupils to be active and to help overcome deprivation in the locality. Additional adults run structured activities such as multi-skill games, football and motor-skill development. Sports leaders provide different games for younger pupils and many pupils use the outdoor stage to perform their own dances. The school sports partnership also provides additional activities such as yoga, a group working with professional swimmers and another accessing a sports ability festival. The school played a full part in the national sports week.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- considering including other aspects of pupils' achievements in the assessment procedures
- extending further the analysis of assessment data and using the information in reports to parents and carers on their child's achievements
- placing more emphasis on the impact for pupils when evaluating provision.

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

Judith Rundle  
Her Majesty's Inspector