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Mr D Williams
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Williams

Ofsted 2009-10 subject survey inspection programme: personal, social and health education (PSHE)

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 3 November 2009 to look at work in PSHE.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of PSHE, the visit had a particular focus on learning how to stay safe.

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 included: interviews with the deputy headteacher, a governor, the subject leader and groups of pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of two lessons.

The overall effectiveness of PSHE is outstanding.

Achievement in PSHE

Achievement in PSHE is outstanding.

- Pupils are very confident, thoughtful and enthusiastic. They offer their views eagerly and listen carefully to different opinions. They are extremely welcoming and considerate to others.
- Pupils are making particularly good progress in learning how to stay safe in a wide variety of ways, ranging from road safety to recognising the risks of talking to strangers.

- Pupils have an exceptionally good knowledge of how to stay healthy. They know how to choose foods wisely and the importance of exercise.
- Pupils' knowledge of drugs is extremely good. They know the effects of legal and illegal drugs, including the dangers of tobacco and alcohol. They have learned how to assess risks and make informed decisions extremely well.
- Pupils' knowledge about how to manage their money is developed very well. They understand how to manage a budget, and the benefits and pitfalls of mortgages and credit cards. They have a very secure understanding of the world of work and are developing their team skills well, although a few pupils sometimes do not readily collaborate with their peers.
- Pupils' knowledge about how the body changes and how friendships change as they reach puberty is slightly less well developed than other areas of PSHE.

Quality of teaching of PSHE

The quality of teaching in PSHE is outstanding.

- Lessons are planned extremely well, with a good variety of activities including good use of information and communication technology (ICT).
- Teachers introduce lessons in ways that help pupils to understand what they are learning about. Good use is made of resources, such as finger puppets or photographs, to help pupils understand new ideas in a practical way.
- The work is matched to pupils' varied abilities very well and lessons move at a brisk pace, so pupils are suitably challenged and do not get bored.
- Teaching assistants make a good contribution to lessons, through careful planning together with the teacher, which ensures that good use is made of their time.
- There is a strong emphasis on pupils' learning to work together in teams.
- Assessment is developing well and the school system is beginning to show pupils' progress. There are very good procedures to help pupils reflect on their learning and to ensure they know what they need to do next to improve.

Quality of the curriculum in PSHE

The quality of the PSHE curriculum is outstanding.

- Curriculum planning is extremely effective, resulting in lessons that are relevant and interesting. The scheme of work ensures that all areas are covered in a progressive way.
- Pupils are closely involved in deciding the themes for units of work, so the curriculum meets their needs very well. The themed units are carefully

planned to ensure that key areas of knowledge, skills and understanding are included.

- PSHE lessons are complemented by good links with other subjects, which are particularly effective in developing pupils' skills, such as discussion.
- Provision to extend pupils' knowledge about body changes and how friendships change as they reach puberty is slightly less effective than other areas of PSHE.

Effectiveness of the leadership and management in PSHE

The leadership and management of PSHE are outstanding.

- The subject leadership is strong, very thorough and supported well by senior managers.
- The monitoring of the subject is accurate and comprehensive. There is a very clear understanding of the areas that are developed well and those very few areas that need further development.

Subject issue: learning to stay safe

- Pupils have a very good understanding of how to stay safe and they are very knowledgeable about a wide range of risks and dangers.
- There are many opportunities for pupils to practise their skills in staying safe, for example, through road safety events, outdoor education experiences and role-play activity in drug education.
- There are very good opportunities for pupils to learn how to stay safe from bullying and to ensure they know how to protect their e-safety.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- reviewing provision to extend pupils' knowledge about physical changes and how friendships change as they reach puberty, ensuring that there is a suitable emphasis on relationships.

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

Susan Orpin
Additional Inspector