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Mrs A Winter
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Winter

Ofsted 2009-10 subject survey inspection programme: citizenship

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 30 November and 1 December 2009 to look at work in citizenship.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the subject, the visit had a particular focus on students' political understanding.

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 students; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of students' work; and observation of citizenship lessons, as well as other lessons linked to citizenship.

The overall effectiveness of citizenship is satisfactory with good features.

Achievement in citizenship

Achievement in citizenship is satisfactory with some good features.

- Students' knowledge and understanding is patchy with relative strengths in aspects of citizenship, such as rights and responsibilities, but weaknesses including democracy and parliamentary government.
- Work on equality and diversity in Key Stage 4 is an area of strength.
- Students demonstrate citizenship knowledge and understanding and discuss citizenship issues with interest in lessons across the curriculum.
- Students have good and sometimes outstanding opportunities to participate and take responsible action. Examples include the democracy

day, the Building School for the Future project, the school council, peer mentors, prefects and the recycling project.

- However, these 'processes' of critical thinking, advocacy and representation and taking action are insufficiently developed in the context of the National Curriculum for citizenship.

Quality of citizenship teaching

The quality of the teaching observed generally and in citizenship lessons was good and sometimes outstanding.

- Lessons are prepared very well and teachers and other adults show very good knowledge of students and their learning needs.
- Lessons are well paced and effective in making use of a range of learning styles, the purpose of which is understood by the students.
- Relationships with students are outstanding and citizenship lessons make an important contribution to students' personal development.
- Teachers observed in science, geography, English and design technology showed good awareness of the implications of citizenship for their subject areas. Lessons were characterised by good discussion of topical issues, including scarce resources in the health service, the media, global interdependence, future energy needs and sustainability.
- Steps have been taken to use the citizenship eight-level scale for assessment purposes, although this remains at an early stage of development.

Quality of the citizenship curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory with some strengths.

- There is now a secure core citizenship programme in Key Stage 3. Although time has been provided for citizenship in Key Stage 4, there is at present a strong bias in the programme towards Personal Social Health and Economic education.
- The contribution made to the citizenship programme by other subjects is significant.
- The school provides many opportunities for students to become involved in extra-curricular activities, such as democracy day. There is also scope for augmentation of the core programme on the days when the timetable is suspended.
- The school council provides students with the opportunity to be involved in democratic processes, although these could be further developed to mirror UK democracy.

Effectiveness of leadership and management of citizenship

The leadership and management of citizenship are good.

- Senior leaders have recognised the importance of citizenship and provided for it with the appointment of a subject leader, line managed by a senior teacher with citizenship expertise. Resources have been provided as well as time for departmental meetings and curriculum development.
- Although citizenship has an important place in the curriculum and broader life of the school, it has a relatively low profile in key public documents, such as the school prospectus, where it is not mentioned.
- The subject leader has equipped herself very well for her role, taking training opportunities and drawing on expertise from local and national sources.
- Successful leadership is evident in accurate self-review, developments in the curriculum and the whole-school audit against revised National Curriculum requirements.
- The school is developing a 'core team' of citizenship teachers who work together on curriculum development.

Subject issue: students' political understanding

Students' political understanding is satisfactory overall.

- Some students show very good understanding as a result of their extra-curricular work on 'democracy day'.
- In general, students show awareness of topical issues.
- Understanding of politics and political parties is an area of relative weakness.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- consolidating the newly planned units of work in Key Stage 3 and building explicitly on these in Key Stage 4
- providing more opportunities in citizenship and across the curriculum for students to learn the 'processes' of National Curriculum citizenship, particularly advocacy and representation and taking action
- developing the assessment of citizenship through the key stages, exemplifying the standards expected.

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

Scott Harrison
Additional Inspector