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Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Sierotko

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 Monday 16 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.

The overall effectiveness of PE is good.

Achievement in PE

Achievement is good.

- The vast majority of pupils thoroughly enjoy PE and achieve well. Regular participation in lessons and a wide range of sports enrichment activities help them to develop positive attitudes towards learning and make good progress. Children get a great start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, where highly effective teaching helps them to develop good habits and a love of physical activity. It also ensures that most pupils meet or exceed goals set for physical development.

- Pupils build on this solid foundation and make good progress throughout Key Stages 1 and 2. Although the school does not monitor pupils' progress from year to year, evidence collated at the end of each unit of work shows that the vast majority are meeting or exceeding national expectations, particularly in games and swimming. Achievement is less pronounced in gymnastics, an aspect identified by staff as a focus for development this year.
- High achievement was observed in choreography and pupils deciding for themselves how to make their team practices easier or more challenging. The impact on pupils' personal development is illustrated by their excellent behaviour, enthusiasm, eagerness to contribute and desire to do their very best.

Quality of teaching in PE

The quality of teaching is good.

- Lessons are planned well with vigorous warm-ups, plenaries and suitably challenging tasks that build upon prior learning and generate high activity rates. Teachers are good role-models, demonstrating new skills and taking an active part in lessons. They share good relations with pupils and enthuse about PE which pupils respect and value. Pupils work hard in lessons, contribute well during questioning and readily volunteer to help. In dance lessons, learning objectives are made clear and pupils are given sustained periods of time to plan and practice activities before performances. Pupils are well-versed in observing and evaluating each other's work. In one lesson observed, too much was planned, which led to pupils being overloaded with information and insufficient time to consolidate and secure their learning.
- Teachers make and record periodic assessments. National expectations are not shared with pupils in a meaningful way so they are unaware of how well they are doing and what they have to do to improve their work in relation to National Curriculum requirements. The school is poised to introduce new self-assessment procedures to help pupils gauge their own progress against National Curriculum descriptors. In one lesson, video clips of rugby skills were used very well to explain the lesson objectives and to help pupils understand the key elements of passing against opposition.
- Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to ensure that lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are fully included in lessons and receive the support they need to enjoy and achieve. Very few pupils are identified as gifted and talented, even though some of them perform exceptionally well in lessons and participate in out-of-school sport.
- Specialist coaches complement provision. This helps to build teachers' confidence, stimulate pupil interest and promote further engagement in after-school sport.

Quality of the curriculum in PE

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- The time allocated to PE lessons is less than government expectations, although teachers maximise time to ensure that high-quality learning takes place. The wealth of sports enrichment delivered in school and through the school sports partnership is considerable but the school does not collate the amount of additional time pupils are engaged in physical activity to ensure they are meeting the expected five hours.
- Areas of learning appeal to the needs and interests of all pupils and are of suitable length, including transition units taught in Year 6 to aid the move into high school. Senior leaders are reviewing the school curriculum and recognise the opportunity to extend links between PE and learning in other subjects. When asked what changes they would make in PE, one pupil said, 'I wouldn't change anything because PE in this school is really good', reflecting the views of the majority.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in PE

The effectiveness of leadership and management is good.

- Knowledge and motivation are key features of PE leadership and together you are improving the subject. Your joint aspirations are reflected in a succinct and relevant PE development plan. Efforts to raise awareness of PE and sport through a newsletter to parents and dedicated space for PE and sports notice boards around the school are having a positive impact on raising the profile of PE and school sport.
- Accurate self-evaluation has identified the main strengths and weaknesses of PE. Discussion during staff meetings has helped to inform training needs and initiate suitable training to strengthen the teaching of dance. Monitoring of lessons is less well-established; improvement planning rightly identifies the need for a cycle of lesson observations to develop best practice. Primary link training days are used effectively to share training opportunities amongst staff and improve practice. Working with other schools within the school sports partnership is generating many more opportunities for pupils to participate and enjoy school.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- extending and improving curriculum planning and assessment resources to provide an accurate overview of how well all pupils are achieving
- embedding new self-assessment procedures so pupils are fully engaged in assessing their own progress and are able to identify what they need to do to improve their work
- collating the total amount of time pupils are engaged in all aspects of physical activity to confirm that the school is providing all pupils with at least two hours of PE and sport each week.

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

John Mitcheson
Her Majesty's Inspector