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Mr N Griffiths
Headteacher
John Kyrle High School and Sixth Form
Ledbury Road
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Herefordshire
HR9 7ET

Dear Mr Griffiths

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

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 28 January 2010 to look at work in PSHE education.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the PSHE education, 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.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included: interviews with you and your senior team, the PSHE subject leader, the careers subject leader, two heads of year, six parents, three groups of students from Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4 and the sixth form; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of students' work; and observation of four lessons containing PSHE education themes. All the lessons were observed jointly with senior leaders.

The overall effectiveness of PSHE education is good.

Quality of teaching of PSHE education

The quality of teaching of PSHE education is good.

- In the majority of lessons, teachers incorporate PSHE education themes across the curriculum in an outstanding way. Students are actively involved in stimulating tasks that deepen their understanding and significantly develop their confidence and self-esteem. In a minority of lessons, PSHE education themes are less well developed and opportunities to reinforce the relevant skills are missed.

- All teachers plan extensively. Lessons contain a good range of enjoyable activities which often involve working in pairs and groups.
- Outstanding and timely emotional support is provided for students experiencing challenge in their lives. This support helps them develop personal strategies to manage their feelings effectively.
- Insufficient use is made of assessment to measure students' progress in PSHE education.

Quality of the curriculum in PSHE education

The quality of the PSHE education curriculum is good.

- Good quality external professionals are used well to enhance aspects of the PSHE education curriculum. Students speak highly of the amount they learn from the focused content of these sessions.
- The school's specialist focus areas ensure that all students are well prepared for their future economic well-being.
- The PSHE education curriculum is delivered in three discrete weeks during the school year. This is supported by tutor time and identified PSHE education themes across the curriculum. Students achieve better outcomes in the discrete PSHE education curriculum weeks.
- The PSHE education scheme of work is mapped throughout the school, but not refined enough to ensure sufficient depth.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in PSHE education

The leadership and management of PSHE education are good.

- The PSHE education thematic weeks are well organised and evaluated. They are well received by students. The quality of the lesson plans prepared by the subject leader is good.
- The PSHE education department regularly reviews its provision and seeks improvement. Good support is provided by the senior leadership group.
- There is good liaison with the school's pastoral team and external agencies to support all students, especially the more vulnerable.
- Monitoring and evaluation of PSHE education across the curriculum are currently underdeveloped.

Subject issue: learning to stay safe

Strategies to ensure that students learn to stay safe are good. Parents and students agree. They know how to protect passwords and the dangers of sharing information on the internet. More vulnerable students are provided with social areas in the school where they feel safe and can develop personal and social skills with peers and adults. Targeted support is provided for students identified as 'at-risk', to keep them safe and help them achieve.

Students know how to measure risk within relationships to secure their well-being.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring that all lessons across the curriculum consistently develop PSHE education skills in line with the school's curriculum policy
- developing strategies to assess students' progress in PSHE education
- providing more opportunities for the subject leader to monitor the delivery of the PSHE education curriculum.

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

Clive Kempton
Her Majesty's Inspector