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Mrs J Warne
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Warne

Ofsted 2009-10 subject survey inspection programme: physical education (PE)

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and pupils, during my visit on 10 and 11 March 2010 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 for 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, and observation of lessons, therapy sessions and other activities.

The overall effectiveness of PE is outstanding.

Achievement in PE

Achievement in PE and physical development is outstanding.

- All pupils make good or better progress from their starting points and work towards P levels during their time at the school. A small minority of pupils attain National Curriculum levels although pupils attain well below national average because of their particular needs. Older pupils attain success and accreditation in a broad range of activities that includes swimming and athletics alongside AQA and entry level qualifications.
- More able pupils with severe special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress in acquiring new skills in a range of activities because

of the quality of teaching. Pupils with profound and complex difficulties also make good progress because of high levels of support from teachers, teaching assistants and the therapy team.

- Pupils have good opportunities to develop their understanding of healthy lifestyles, including through vigorous warm-ups at the start of lessons to raise pulse levels and improve levels of fitness. More able pupils recognise good features of other's performances.
- Pupils have excellent opportunities to make choices in lessons and have numerous opportunities to feedback on the environment for physical activity through the use of Makaton symbols. For example, they make decisions on new playground equipment and how best to move around school corridors safely.
- Pupils develop and gain confidence in their own abilities in PE through support and are challenged well to develop independence in their work. They show high levels of concentration and determination to succeed, and develop resilience in improving their performances. Pupils spoken to and those observed in lessons and extra-curricular activities thoroughly enjoy PE. One pupil said, 'I love PE because it helps you get strong'.

Quality of teaching in PE

The quality of teaching in PE is outstanding.

- The vast majority of lessons is taught by the subject leader who has excellent subject knowledge that is used extremely well to ensure all pupils make progress in acquiring physical skills, confidence and an ability to work with others. The level of differentiation in every lesson is extraordinary and all pupils have individualised programmes and specific support to meet their needs. Occasionally, higher attaining pupils are not challenged enough.
- Excellent teacher demonstrations enable pupils to understand what they are aiming to achieve in lessons. The pace of lessons is good with swift and well-organised transition between tasks. This is particularly apparent when the subject leader and higher level teaching assistant (HLTA) for PE work together, resulting in successful lessons and learning. Key strengths that enable successful learning are teachers' extremely high expectations, the amount of direct teaching, specific intervention that brings about improvement and positive praise to reinforce acquisition of skills.
- The deployment of the HLTA and other highly skilled teaching assistants for individual support is outstanding in ensuring that all pupils are included, engaged, completing tasks and making progress in the development of their physical skills.
- The school has a wealth of assessment data to evaluate pupils' progress in the broad range of PE and physical development activities. As a result, the subject leader has outstanding knowledge of each pupil's needs. This is used to plan work meticulously to meet each pupil's need, including directing appropriate support. However, assessment information is not

collated centrally, except for swimming, to securely monitor pupils' progress across the range of activities during their time at the school. Although the school makes good use of photographs to record pupils' experiences, the use of video clips to exemplify progress in PE is underdeveloped.

Quality of the curriculum in PE

The quality of the PE curriculum is outstanding.

- The curriculum is planned thoroughly to meet the physical needs of every pupil, especially as they get older. Pupils experience a very broad range of activities that makes best use of on-site as well as other local facilities to extend opportunities. For example, the local inclusive 'playpark' is used for active play sessions and post-16 pupils attend local gyms.
- All pupils have a minimum of two hours PE and physical activity each week and the vast majority experience much more to meet their needs. For example, some pupils have programmes that include physiotherapy, hydrotherapy and horse riding, while others have PE, gym and/or swimming programmes and the Duke of Edinburgh expedition training. Pupils also have excellent opportunities to work with subject specialists in dance and tennis.
- The school makes excellent use of local authority schemes of work that are adapted extremely well by the subject leader to meet the complex needs of all pupils.

Features of best practice

- The range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities is extensive. Pupils thoroughly enjoy lunchtime opportunities for ballroom dancing, dance clubs, football and wheelchair basketball. The school takes every opportunity to enrich pupils' physical experiences with participation in the 'Ten Tors' event, school ability festivals, tournaments arranged through the school sports partnership and recently a 'special inspirational games' linked to the 2012 Paralympics arranged by a local FE college. The opportunities for outdoor and adventurous activities and through the Hollow Lane Club are excellent in ensuring pupils are able to maintain high levels of physical activity both in and out of school hours.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in PE

The effectiveness of leadership and management in PE is outstanding.

- Leaders have an extremely good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of PE. Subject leadership is highly effective in ensuring the smooth day-to-day running of the subject, that all pupils are included and making progress. The introduction of a HLTA for PE has created an excellent team that together has extended opportunities for pupils even further.

- The primary link teacher days are used well to complete professional development that has improved subject knowledge and reinforced leadership roles and responsibilities. These days are used very appropriately by the subject leader to monitor provision across the school, to support colleagues and to bring about improvements.
- Impact of the school sports partnership has significantly helped to raise the profile of PE across the school, increase opportunities for pupils' participation in events outside school and create links with other special schools to share practices.

Features of best practice

- The links created between PE, physio and other therapy programmes are seamless to support every pupil with the exchange of information pivotal to their coordination. As a result, subject leadership has comprehensive records of pupils' achievements in all activities related to PE and physical development.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- exploring systems to make best use of assessment data to monitor pupils' progress in PE and physical development during their time at the school, including video footage to exemplify progress from starting points.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop PE in the school.

As I explained previously, 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