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Mr M Thorp
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Thorp

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 18 January 2010 to look at work in PE.

As outlined in the 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, analysis of pupils' reports and observation of two lessons. I also observed the range of activity and provision for physical development in the Early Years Foundation Stage unit.

The overall effectiveness of PE is satisfactory.

Achievement in PE

Achievement is satisfactory overall.

- From below average starting points, pupils make good progress during the Early Years Foundation Stage. Some 98% of them reach age-related expectations for physical development. Lesson observations in Key Stages 1 and 2 indicate average standards, with pupils making suitable progress towards the attainment targets for PE. However, standards in swimming are not high enough by the end of Key Stage 2, particularly among girls.

- Pupil's communication skills, their health and social well-being are promoted effectively through PE. They have positive attitudes to learning and are developing useful team-working and leadership skills.

Features of best practice

- The high quality provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage promotes pupils' rapid learning and development from a low baseline.

Quality of teaching in PE

The impact of teaching on pupils' learning is currently satisfactory overall. This is despite some evidence of good teaching in individual lessons.

- Teachers are enthusiastic. They support and encourage pupils, and plan enjoyable lessons that are usually matched to pupils' skills and abilities. They have improved their PE subject knowledge by attending relevant courses and this has given them more confidence in delivering the subject. On occasion, staff missed opportunities to stretch the most able pupils.
- Assessment practice is at an early stage of development. At present, staff do not routinely monitor, assess or evaluate pupils' progress beyond the Early Years Foundation Stage. This leaves them unable to accurately assess pupils' progress and attainment in relation to National Curriculum expectations. They do, however, encourage peer assessment.

Quality of the curriculum in PE

The quality of the PE curriculum is good.

- Programmes of study are broad and balanced. They provide pupils with a good range of opportunities to acquire the core strands for PE. The development of pupils' creativity, leadership and problem-solving skills is facilitated through dance, gymnastics and outdoor and adventurous activities, including two residential experiences.
- Pupils receive at least one and a half hours of timetabled PE each week. This is supplemented with daily 'activate' sessions and 30 minutes of access to the school's Zone Park. Lunchtime supervisors and pupils have been trained to lead and support these activities.
- The extended school provision, particularly the work of the school sports partnership, has proved popular and widened pupils' participation in PE and sport. There are a number of clubs linked to the school which enable pupils to develop their talents further.

Features of best practice

- The well balanced and diverse core and enrichment provision promotes enjoyment, high participation rates, engagement and inclusion.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in PE

The effectiveness of leadership and management in PE is satisfactory.

- The PE leadership team is well informed, organised and hard working. Most of the expected policies and practices are in place. Currently, they are unable to evidence the full impact of their work. However, they have enhanced aspects of provision and PE enjoys a high profile in the school.
- Staff are aware of the strengths in provision and what needs to improve. They have insufficient time to assess and evaluate the effectiveness of actions taken and/or monitor the progress pupils are making. The quality of teaching in PE is not currently monitored.
- There is a sound awareness and consideration for the safeguarding procedures in PE and risk assessments are carried out comprehensively.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- introducing more formal, rigorous assessment procedures
- giving subject leaders the time to monitor and evaluate the quality of provision, and plan actions for improvement
- improving standards of swimming, particularly among girls.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop PE 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 Young
Her Majesty's Inspector