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12 February 2009

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Dear Mrs Jones

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 2 February 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; analysis of pupils' reports; and observation of three lessons and other activities.

The overall effectiveness of PE is good.

Achievement in PE

Achievement in PE is good.

- Pupils make good progress in PE and achieve well. When children start school, their physical skills are at a level which matches their age. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage through their engagement in a good range of activities designed to help develop their fine and gross motor skills. Progress continues to be good in Key Stages 1 and 2. In Year 6 in 2009, all pupils reached the expected level and a good proportion exceeded it. Several pupils excel in different aspects of PE and sport and performances are particularly strong in games activities. By the time pupils leave in Year 6, almost all are able to swim 25 metres.

- Pupils' physical skills and achievement are boosted by their involvement in many sports clubs and tournaments. Talented pupils are provided with additional challenges through their involvement in sports partnership and community sports activities. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are given additional support to enable them to develop their physical coordination.
- Pupils' personal development and well-being are significantly enhanced by their involvement in physical activities. Pupils know about the features of a healthy lifestyle and why exercise is important. Older pupils are trained as 'jumping jaxx' play leaders enabling them to take responsibility for organising play activities for younger pupils. There are many opportunities to develop teamwork skills in lessons and inter-school competitions.

Quality of teaching in PE

The quality of teaching in PE is good.

- Lessons are planned well and clear learning objectives are identified and shared with pupils. All four strands of the National Curriculum programme of study are included and pupils are able to acquire, develop and apply their skills. Teachers model skills and techniques for pupils, showing them what they are aiming for in their responses. In one good lesson, pupils used their imagination and creativity in developing increased fluency in their dance routines. In another, the teacher's strong subject knowledge was used effectively to offer pupils precise coaching points to enable them to improve their hockey skills. High expectations in this lesson and in the dance lesson led to excellent engagement, attitudes and behaviour from pupils.
- Teachers assess learning well through their observations and questioning. They also give pupils the chance to watch and discuss their own and other's work and make suggestions for how it might be improved. Teachers complete records of attainment for individual pupils. Reports are written for parents on pupils' achievements in PE. Comprehensive records are also kept of children's progress in physical development in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Quality of the curriculum in PE

The quality of the PE curriculum is good.

- Pupils enjoy two hours of PE in their weekly timetable. All areas of learning are included in the curriculum, including swimming, but a very small hall space affects provision in gymnastics and dance. Last year, good use was made of the local secondary sports school facilities to enable Early Years Foundation Stage, Year 1, Year 2 and Year 5 and 6 pupils to do gymnastics. Work in PE is linked well to learning in other subjects, for example mathematics problem-solving and pupils' writing in connection with their development of hockey skills. Dance is also linked to cultural and historical themes.

- Pupils take part in many well-attended after-school sports clubs led by staff and visiting coaches. They also have several opportunities to play in sports partnership tournaments and competitions. There is a strong focus in the curriculum on keeping fit and on adopting healthy lifestyles. Good links with community clubs enable pupils to continue their sporting interests outside of school.

Features of best practice

- Provision for outdoor and adventurous activities is outstanding. The school has a well used school garden in which children in the Early Years Foundation Stage develop good physical skills and older pupils grow produce. All pupils also visit a local field study centre where they are able to take part in an excellent programme of water- and land-based pursuits, such as canoeing, rafting, horse riding, potholing and orienteering challenges.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in PE

The effectiveness of leadership and management in PE is good.

- Leaders give PE and sport a suitably high profile and recognise the value of their contribution to pupils' personal development, health and well-being. Newsletters to parents provide details of events and celebrate pupils' many achievements. Involvement with the school sports partnership has been used very well to improve provision. Professional development for staff, guidance on assessing pupils' attainment, and introducing pupils to a wide range of sports activities are some of the benefits.
- A subject evaluation correctly identifies strengths in provision and areas for development and pupils' and parents' views are collected to inform improvements. Some observations of lessons have been completed but too little primary link teacher (PLT) time is allocated to monitoring and evaluation, including collating and analysing attainment records to evaluate progress.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring a balance is retained in the curriculum and includes sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their gymnastics skills
- making effective use of PLT time to moderate, collate and analyse teachers' assessments, and evaluate rates of progress.

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

Rob McKeown
Her Majesty's Inspector