

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



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Mr C J Hoyle
Headteacher
Ridgewood School
Barnsley Road
Scawsby
Doncaster
DN5 7UB

Dear Mr Hoyle

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

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and students, during my visit on 1 and 2 March 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 areas of best practice in PE and their impact for students.

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 students, scrutiny of documentation, analysis of students' work and nine lesson observations. I also observed the activities taking place at lunchtime.

The overall effectiveness of PE is good, with some outstanding features.

Achievement in PE

Achievement in PE is good and students' attainment is high.

- From average starting points, students' progress in Key Stage 3 is good. By the end of Year 9, standards are above average. GCSE PE results also exceed national averages, particularly in the number of students gaining the higher A* and A grades. Similarly, the BTEC Sport Diploma has a 100% pass rate, 60% of which are distinctions or merits. The school has a number of outstanding sportsmen and women. These include county and national representatives and a world and British champions.
- Lesson observations, work scrutiny and school data show that high attainment and achievement are more evident among examination cohorts than in the core lessons.

- Suitable Year 9 students are fast-tracked through the BTEC certificate course with success.
- Students develop high self-esteem, effective leadership and team-working skills through the Junior Sports Leaders, Duke of Edinburgh and Certificate of Personal Effectiveness courses run by the PE department. Regular, whole-school health-related fitness days also encourage them to lead healthy lifestyles.

Features of best practice

- The school is highly effective at mentoring, supporting and guiding elite performers through their nationally recognised Junior Athlete Education programme.

Quality of teaching in PE

The quality of PE teaching is good overall and promotes effective learning.

- Thorough planning, enthusiastic and focused teaching, and good support and guidance are the foundations of the effective learning taking place. Lessons are, on the whole, challenging and enjoyable. Teaching was most effective when staff used strategies that took account of students' individual needs. Students responded best to sessions that actively involved them in leading their own learning.
- Occasionally, valuable learning time is lost when lessons lack urgency. Students are slow to change and/or remain passive for long periods. A group of disaffected Key Stage 4 girls makes little or no effort in PE.
- Good relationships have been nurtured with students. They respect and appreciate the considerable time staff dedicate to helping them hone their skills and develop their sporting interests, within and outside the curriculum.
- Teachers use PE data well to assess, target-set and monitor students' progress and attainment. Alongside staff feedback, students assess themselves and their peers which gives them a strong sense of how well they are doing and how they can improve further.

Quality of the curriculum in PE

The quality of the PE curriculum is good.

- The programme of study is varied and takes good account of changes to the new PE National Curriculum. It enables students to securely acquire the core competencies for PE, as well as providing leadership, problem-solving and work-related learning opportunities. The GCSE PE course has been replaced by the more vocational BTEC Sport Diploma.
- Students receive two 50-minute lessons of PE weekly, which is lower than the Government's recommendation. To supplement this, additional PE enrichment days are held. Those taking accredited courses receive more PE time.

- Links are developing between PE and the school's engineering and applied learning specialism, leading to some cross-curricular collaboration. Overall, PE facilities and resources support curriculum delivery effectively.

Features of best practice

- A very inclusive lunchtime and after-school activities programme supports the curriculum extremely well, offering a range of competitive, atypical and leisure-based options. It also includes booster classes, leadership and officiating courses.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in PE

The effectiveness of leadership and management in PE is good.

- Coordination of PE is sound, informed and diligent. Some responsibilities are distributed and take account of the strengths of individual staff. You understand that key skills developed in PE can contribute to raising whole-school standards and give your full support to them and the PE team.
- Careful attention is paid to planning for success. Regular monitoring and evaluation of the impact of actions taken, the quality of current provision and refining the curriculum to better suit students are proving successful. As a result, standards are high and rising, students enjoy PE and it has a high profile in the school. It runs very smoothly on a day-to-day basis.
- Capacity for further sustained improvement is good, given the success of steps taken to enhance the effectiveness of PE provision.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring staff maximise the learning time available
- re-engaging the disaffected girls in Key Stage 4
- narrowing the gap between progress in core and examination cohorts.

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

John Young
Her Majesty's Inspector