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Dear Miss Eskelson

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

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and pupils, during my visit on 5 February 2010 to look at work in PSHE.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of PSHE, the visit had a particular focus on learning 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, the PSHE coordinator, a governor and a group of pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of two lessons and one assembly.

The overall effectiveness of PSHE is satisfactory.

Achievement in PSHE

Achievement in PSHE is satisfactory.

- Pupils are confident, caring and very reflective. They eagerly contribute their views and are making good progress in developing the ability to listen to each other.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different feelings, how to recognise them in others and how to manage their emotions. They are able to use these skills to help them become better learners and develop socially.

- Pupils are making satisfactory progress in learning how to stay safe. For example, they understand the importance of road safety and are able to use their skills when outside the school. They are less able to assess some other risks, for example in relation to drugs.
- Pupils have a secure knowledge of how to stay healthy and know the importance of eating five fruits or vegetables every day. They know that exercise is important but are less sure about how much to exercise.
- Pupils have limited understanding of the dangers and effects of drugs including tobacco and alcohol. Older pupils have a basic knowledge about body changes, but their understanding of how friendships change as they reach puberty is less well developed.
- Pupils have a secure understanding of the world of work, but their knowledge about how to manage their money is insufficiently developed.

Quality of teaching of PSHE

The quality of teaching of PSHE is good.

- Teachers have positive and purposeful relationships with pupils. They manage their pupils' behaviour well, so lessons are effective.
- Lessons are planned thoughtfully to provide a variety of activities. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, pupils considered how people overcome obstacles. The teacher used a video clip from Edward Scissorhands to help pupils to understand issues such as prejudice and being misunderstood. This was combined with opportunities for discussion and group work so the pupils' interest was maintained.
- Teachers make good use of questions to help pupils develop and extend their ideas. They listen to pupils' answers and then use subsequent questions to explore issues in more depth. However, in both the lessons observed, the question and answer sessions slowed the pace of the work, so pupils were sitting listening for too long and became slightly restless.
- Teaching assistants make a good contribution to lessons through specific help and comment to individual pupils and working with groups.
- In one lesson, good use was made of the interactive whiteboard to make the lesson more interesting and provide written prompts to help pupils learn.
- Assessment is at an early stage of development, so there is not enough information to show pupils how well they are doing or demonstrate their progress.

Quality of the curriculum in PSHE

The PSHE curriculum is satisfactory

- The use of social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) materials is effective and has had a significant impact on improving pupils' emotional development, meeting their needs well.

- Good use is made of trips and visitors to help make learning more interesting, relevant and enjoyable. For example, during the inspection, a visiting theatre company were helping develop pupils' understanding of road safety through a shortened production of the Hobbit. Very good use is made of additional agencies, such as child therapy, to help develop pupils' personal and social skills.
- However, while meeting statutory requirements, insufficient time is spent on key areas of the PSHE curriculum to ensure that pupils have sufficient opportunity to develop their understanding as they move through the school.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in PSHE

The leadership and management of PSHE are satisfactory.

- The leadership of the area is enthusiastic and thorough in relation to the development of SEAL, which has been introduced well and has had a clear impact on pupils' personal development.
- PSHE is being given suitable importance in school planning which is reflected in recent work to review provision and plan the action that needs to be taken.
- Although there has been some monitoring of teachers work in SEAL, there has not been enough monitoring of PSHE overall. However, leaders have an accurate understanding of areas that need development.
- There is insufficient staff training, especially in sex and relationships, and drugs education.

Subject issue: learning to stay safe

- Pupils have a secure understanding about how to stay safe and they know about some risks and dangers.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to develop their decision-making skills, although these are not always sufficiently linked to particular risks.
- There is good provision to ensure that pupils learn how to use specialist equipment, for example, sharp tools.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- planning the curriculum to make sure that pupils regularly learn about key areas such as drug education
- developing more assessment tasks
- monitoring the quality of PSHE teaching.

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

Susan Orpin
Additional Inspector