

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404040
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



3 February 2010

Mrs J Crow
Headteacher
Cardinal Newman Catholic School
Warden Hill Road
Luton
Bedfordshire
LU2 7AG

Dear Mrs Crow

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

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and students, during my visit on 20 and 21 January 2010 to look at work in PSHE education.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of PSHE education, 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 staff, a parent governor, students from Years 9, 11 and the sixth form, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of students' work and observation of six lessons.

The overall effectiveness of PSHE education is good.

Achievement in PSHE education

Achievement in PSHE education is good.

- Students have a good understanding of how to stay physically and mentally healthy.
- Students' good knowledge of drugs and alcohol education informs their lifestyle choices. Older students are very self-assured about how to avoid violent crime and being safe when they go out.

- The comprehensive Human Relations programme enables students to develop a very good understanding of different types of relationships and family breakdown. Students have a detailed understanding of sex and relationships education by the end of Year 11.
- Students have developed many strategies to resist peer pressure and report that role-play situations have helped to build confidence and ensure they are in control.
- Students are prepared well for the future; they receive detailed and informative advice on careers. However, their understanding about economic concepts, business terms and financial matters is inconsistent within year groups.
- Many students have very good social skills. They are articulate and able to express their views. Students are confident in their ability to face change and manage risk.

Quality of teaching of PSHE education

The quality of teaching of PSHE education is good.

- Lessons are planned well with a key focus on meeting the needs of individual students. A very good range of activities is used effectively to engage and motivate students in their learning.
- Discussion activities are informative and managed well; especially around sensitive issues, such as sexually transmitted infections.
- Positive relationships exist between teachers and students and among students themselves, which aid learning and lead to the good development of skills and attitudes.
- Questions during lessons are not sufficiently directed to a range of students. In some lessons, there is too much reliance on the same students to provide answers.
- Resources are of very high quality and are enhanced by a plethora of online materials.
- Assessment opportunities are clearly built into lesson plans but it is not evident how they are used to judge progress across key stages. Reports on PSHE education are not specific enough.

Quality of the curriculum in PSHE education

The PSHE education curriculum is good.

- The PSHE education curriculum is broad and increasingly delivered by a specialist team with dedicated curriculum time. It is organised well and imaginative.
- Clear and appropriate schemes of work and lesson plans are in place.
- The needs of vulnerable students are met very well through the Student Progress Centre.

- The social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) have been developed well to ensure an effective transition from primary school to Year 7. Good use is made of the Secondary National Strategy resources.
- The school uses a wide range of external agencies to support the delivery of PSHE education. In particular, local voluntary groups, theatre companies and speakers.
- Students' views are actively sought and acted upon to develop the subject, such as introducing domestic violence and self-harm into the PSHE education curriculum.
- Specialist status in science makes a useful impact on teaching and learning. Information and communication technology is used well in lessons.
- There is no overview of PSHE education across the curriculum and in particular of financial, economic and business delivery. The contribution of other subjects to PSHE education is not clear.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in PSHE education

The leadership and management of PSHE education are outstanding.

- There is a very good level of support from senior leaders in developing PSHE education, thus leading to the restructuring of its delivery in September 2009.
- There is clear sense of direction and high levels of commitment to resolve any weaknesses.
- There is very rigorous monitoring and evaluation of PSHE education. This includes frequent monitoring of teaching and learning to assess strengths and areas for development.
- The PSHE education development plan is well focused and linked to some whole-school priorities.
- There are very strong links with the local authority, regular training and development and very effective support for non-specialist teachers.

Subject issue: learning to stay safe

- The curriculum ensures very good coverage of safety issues and is continually being updated to include topics such as domestic violence and violent extremism.
- Students have detailed knowledge and understanding about being safe in practical lessons such as science, design technology and physical education.
- They feel very safe in school and if any bullying does occur it is dealt with effectively. They know who to talk to in school if there is a problem.
- Students have a very good understanding about e-safety.

- Trips and residentials are organised well and safety is a key priority. Both parents and students are given detailed safety information beforehand.
- Parent support the view that learning to be safe is given a high priority. Work experience is organised extremely well and all health and safety issues covered effectively. The school has the right balance and coverage in the curriculum to enable students to manage risk.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring a cross-curricular audit accurately reflects PSHE education in other subject areas
- developing current practice in assessment and reporting so it is more rigorous and clearly linked to end of key stage statements.

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

Davinder Dosanjh
Her Majesty's Inspector