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Mr G Pettengell
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Dear Mr Pettengell

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 10 February 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 and students, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of students' work and observation of four lessons and one assembly.

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 healthy. They recognise the need to exercise and have a balanced diet. Participation in sport is high with all students doing two and a half hours of physical education a week.
- Students have good strategies to manage risk and know about the effects of drugs and alcohol misuse.

- They have a sound knowledge of sex and relationships education; however, aspects of this could be delivered earlier in the curriculum.
- Students can recognise the different types of bullying but their understanding of homophobic bullying is not as strong.
- Students are confident and friendly and readily contribute their views.
- Students are well informed about future options and choices, but their knowledge of aspects of financial terms and money matters is patchy.

Quality of teaching of PSHE education

The quality of teaching of PSHE education is good.

- Lessons are very effective in engaging students in their learning. Teachers use a range of interesting activities.
- Teachers show good subject knowledge and the pace of work in lessons is brisk.
- Positive relationships exist between staff and students and behaviour is managed well.
- Information and communication technology is used well to encourage debate and discussion.
- Some well-focused plenaries at the end of lessons are very effective in checking the progress that has been made in learning.
- Lesson plans, while identifying the different needs of students, do not always provide the necessary tasks or resources to meet these needs.
- Assessment opportunities are provided for students but these are of variable quality and success. The monitoring and reporting of PSHE education is not sufficiently developed across both key stages.

Quality of the curriculum in PSHE education

The PSHE education curriculum is good.

- The curriculum is broad and includes both discrete and cross-curricular delivery. It is continually being developed and is supplemented by assemblies.
- Suitable schemes of work and lesson plans are in place with supporting materials for non-specialists teaching the subject.
- An increasing range of external agencies is used to good effect to support the PSHE education curriculum. This includes theatre companies, the road safety team and the alcohol abuse team.
- Student consultation has been focused well to inform curriculum planning and develop the sex and relationships education policy.
- The social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) have been used well to support the transition of Year 7 students from primary school and teach

aspects of anti-bullying. There is some evidence of improvement in the emotional well-being of students.

- Healthy schools status has been very beneficial, strengthening healthy eating, increasing sporting activities and developing multi-agency and partnership work.
- A full curriculum audit has not yet captured all aspects of PSHE education across the curriculum.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in PSHE education

The leadership and management of PSHE education are good.

- PSHE education is given sufficient priority by senior leaders.
- The relatively new subject leadership has developed many aspects of the provision in a short time. There is good commitment and capacity to developing the subject further.
- Action plans clearly identify the priorities for PSHE education and how weaknesses will be tackled.
- Good use is made of local authority advisers and professional development opportunities.
- There is insufficient monitoring and evaluation of lessons and the quality of work in books.

Subject issue: learning to stay safe

- The curriculum covers many aspects of safety but there is an insufficient focus on personal safety, violence and knife crime.
- Students have a good knowledge about safety when using new technologies.
- Students feel very safe in school and are very confident that if they report issues they will be dealt with.
- Practical subject areas give very good advice about safety, which students are aware of and follow.
- Students are well prepared for work experience with health and safety issues in the workplace covered effectively. They are aware of hazards and how to minimise risk.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- completing the full curriculum audit to capture all aspects of PSHE education across the curriculum
- developing the current procedures for assessment and reporting of PSHE education so that they are thorough and accurately reflect the end of key stage statements.

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

Davinder Dosanjh
Her Majesty's Inspector