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Mr J P Byrne
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Dear Mr Byrne

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 pupils, during my visit on 2 and 3 March 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 pupils, parents, governors and staff; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of two lessons.

The overall effectiveness of PSHE education is outstanding.

Achievement in PSHE education

Achievement in PSHE education is outstanding.

- All pupils, irrespective of their disabilities, which include severe and profound learning, physical, multi-sensory and challenging behaviours, learn to make sensible choices about their health, well-being and personal safety, including how to ask for and how to decline help.
- Pupils' personal development is excellent, as exemplified by the enjoyment they get from carrying out many tasks around the school for other pupils and the staff.

- Pupils gain much satisfaction by contributing to the world around them, for example by raising money to buy materials to construct a bird table for the birds during the winter months.
- Members of the school council make a significant contribution to the life and work of the school. For example, they make suggestions about the choice of food taken at lunchtime and choose soft toys for younger pupils.
- Pupils have an appropriate understanding about sex and relationships education.

Quality of teaching of PSHE education

The quality of teaching of PSHE education is outstanding.

- The two lessons seen had very strong features. These included the quality of relationships between staff and pupils, the team work between all staff and the use of many different types of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning.
- Staff identify pupils' needs exceptionally well as a result of using excellent assessment. This results in the provision of exemplary support to develop their personal and social skills.
- Teachers use assessment information to plan the excellent curriculum. A recent example is the timely and appropriate series of lessons on 'our developing bodies and how it will affect us'.
- Parents and carers are kept fully informed about these matters and are also made aware of their children's progress in the subject.

Quality of the curriculum in PSHE education

The PSHE curriculum is outstanding.

- Provision for pupils' learning is planned meticulously and is overseen sensitively by school leaders.
- Pupils' personal and social development is significantly enhanced by the explicit emphasis teachers give to developing their independence and skills of organisation.
- Excellent use is made of visits to develop pupils' learning. For example, when raising money for charity by packing for the customers at a local store.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in PSHE education

The leadership and management of PSHE education are outstanding.

- All staff embrace the subject wholeheartedly.
- Provision for pupils' social and personal development with a focus on 'self-help', permeates the school's work.

- The subject is given a very high priority throughout the school as a result of the drive of school leaders, governors and trustees.
- Plans to improve the subject even further are not sufficiently focused.

Subject issue: learning to stay safe

- The school ensures pupils are prepared very well for living in their local communities.
- Environments that reduce pupils' dependency are nurtured. For example, within the school grounds a replica of a street has been created, with all the usual street furniture such as lighting, traffic lights and a pelican crossing. This prepares pupils very well for real life.
- Pupils have a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe.
- Pupils benefit from extensive attention to their personal care routines. For example, they have very good access to both physiotherapy and hydrotherapy.

Area for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring improvement planning is systematic.

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

Henry Moreton
Additional Inspector