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12 April 2010

Mrs S Hyland  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Hyland

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 30 and 31 March 2010 to look at work in PE.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the subject, the visit had a particular focus on the identification of an area of best practice in PE and its 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 relevant documentation, analysis of students' work and observation of 11 lessons.

The overall effectiveness of PE is good.

Achievement in PE

Achievement in PE is good.

- Students make satisfactory progress and attain broadly average standards by the end of Key Stage 3. Their rate of progress increases as they move into Key Stage 4 and embark on well-tailored learning programmes.
- Attainment in GCSE is consistently above average and the introduction of vocational courses has raised standards even further across all groups of students. The majority of students make very good progress in both the Certificate and Diploma BTEC courses. They show a desire to improve, apply themselves diligently in lessons and work hard to meet their targets.

- Students enjoy PE, behave well, rarely fail to take part and show a commitment to achieving their full potential. They acquire knowledge and apply skills well. Their ability to evaluate and improve performance and their understanding of physical and mental capacity are less well developed in Key Stage 3.
- Owing to the school's outstanding health promotion and high subject profile, physical activity becomes increasingly more central to students' lives as they move through the school. The school's response to the student voice has brought about positive changes in provision.
- The successful young leadership model developed by the PE department and now being used by other departments is having a positive impact on the school. Senior student leaders are very good role-models and are increasingly being used to raise achievement, by supporting younger students, for example, in paired reading programmes.

### Quality of teaching in PE

The quality of teaching in PE is good.

- In most activities, specialist teachers have good subject knowledge which helps to motivate and engage students. They generally plan and organise lessons well and pay appropriate regard to safety. A good range of resources, including technology, is used to support learning by helping students to know how well they are doing and to understand how to improve. Opportunities to coach, lead and officiate are becoming an integral part of the curriculum. In most lessons, students observe and evaluate performance and the quality of their feedback improves as they move through the school. Teacher assessments are regular and systematic; cross-moderation ensures consistency.
- In the most effective lessons, teachers have high expectations and challenge students, often through high quality questioning and feedback to gauge the level of knowledge and understanding and extend their thinking skills. Teachers subsequently reshape tasks, ensuring that work is appropriate to all students. Learning outcomes are clear and teachers make regular reference to them during and at the end of lessons; progress is measured in relation to learning outcomes.
- These lessons include a wide variety of often interactive tasks which give students responsibility to lead their own learning and become effective, creative and thoughtful learners. Little time is wasted and lessons move at a fast pace with high levels of activity. Where teaching was less challenging, progress was measured on task completion rather than the quality of learning.

### Quality of the curriculum in PE

The quality of the PE curriculum is outstanding.

- Recent curriculum developments have resulted in a programme of study which offers very good breadth and balance and is customised to the needs of the full range of students. The innovative design has personalised the learning to a degree that students are able to fulfil their potential both academically and in their personal development and well-being. Being able to opt into these tailored pathways has significantly increased motivation, providing students with memorable and exciting experiences. One Year 10 student said, 'Leadership, especially when we go into the primary schools, has really increased my confidence and helped me to improve in my school work.'
- All students exceed the Government's two-hour a week expectation for PE through curriculum provision and the majority meet the three-hour target. A large proportion of students, especially in Key Stage 3, is inspired to attending the vast range of activities offered during extra-curricular time. Effective community-club links have placed the school in a strong position to meet the five-hour offer.

#### Features of best practice

- The progressive curriculum offer, including core and accreditation PE, the extensive extra-curricular programme and further enrichment activities provide examples of best practice. A well-tailored curriculum, allied to close liaison with key partners, such as extended services, community clubs and the school sport partnership, ensures that all students are, first of all, inspired to take part and then ultimately achieve a qualification.

#### Effectiveness of leadership and management of PE

The effectiveness of leadership and management in PE is outstanding.

- Leadership is strong at all levels. The subject leader and director of specialism, together, provide an ambitious vision for improvement. Roles throughout the department are clearly defined and accountable. All staff carry out their responsibilities diligently, including maintaining a strong commitment to out-of-school hours' activities. There is a collective drive to be the best. Leaders ensure that the department is highly organised and operates to consistent, professional routines and standards.
- Subject monitoring is thorough. Leaders have a clear picture of the strengths and areas for development, as illustrated by the detailed improvement plan. Recent actions taken have brought about significant improvement, not least the customised curriculum. Leadership makes very good use of the range of expertise in the department and external specialists to achieve the best possible provision. As a result, outcomes in achievement and well-being for most students are good and for some exceptionally high.
- There is good capacity to make further improvements.

## Features of best practice

- The impact of specialist sports status is outstanding. PE and sport are given very high profile and are having a positive impact on the lives of students. They want to lead healthy lifestyles and, through effective leadership programmes which are being emulated across the curriculum, develop confidence, self-esteem and communication skills. Take-up and achievement on sport-related accreditation have improved dramatically and become a significant factor in raising whole-school standards. PE is at the forefront of many school initiatives and the school sport partnership has had a real impact on improving feeder primary school provision and establishing more effective transition.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring that, in core PE lessons, students are consistently challenged to make progress across all of the processes, by raising the expectations of some teachers and improving questioning and feedback techniques
- reviewing the schemes of work to fully reflect revised National Curriculum requirements including more explicit promotion of personal learning and thinking skills.

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

Geoff Sheldon  
Additional Inspector