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Mr S Watkins
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Dear Mr Watkins

Ofsted 2010-11 subject survey inspection programme: physical education (PE)

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and pupils, during my visit on 9 June 2010 to look at work in PE.

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 pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' reports and observation of three lessons and other physical activities.

The overall effectiveness of PE is satisfactory.

Achievement in PE

Achievement in PE is satisfactory.

- Attainment is satisfactory overall, as seen in the lessons observed and in data held by the school. Pupils' attainment is slightly better in dance because of the quality of teaching. A number of pupils are highly successful in individual and/or team activities such as swimming, diving and cross-country running.
- Pupils make satisfactory progress. Few pupils are able to give specific examples of where and how they had improved their work, instead describing their experiences. Pupils have a good understanding of how diet and hydration contribute towards a healthy lifestyle but are uncertain of how much exercise is recommended each week to maintain fitness levels. They have some opportunities to observe, evaluate and suggest improvements to each other's work although the success of this is varied

between lessons. Where it is most effective, pupils are able to accurately give two areas of strength and one wish for improvement.

- All pupils spoken to said how much they enjoy the subject. As one said, 'PE is really fun and everyone loves it'. Behaviour is good and participation rates in lessons and extra-curricular activities are high. Pupils work cooperatively in lessons and in the playground, sharing equipment sensibly and listening and responding positively to each other's comments. However, they have inconsistent opportunities to work independently in lessons. A few more able pupils have opportunities to take different roles in lessons, including coaching other pupils and/or working with younger pupils in leadership roles, although this is not extensive.

Quality of teaching in PE

The quality of teaching in PE is satisfactory.

- Teachers' subject knowledge is generally satisfactory, and good in dance and athletics, leading to clearly differentiated tasks and resources for pupils' differing levels of ability. However, lessons are too frequently focused on completing tasks rather than helping pupils to make progress in their skills, performance and understanding of the activity. Occasionally, not enough time is given for pupils to consolidate their learning before moving to the next step in learning.
- The range of teaching methods is satisfactory overall. The use of assessment for learning strategies is emerging, and some effective use is made of open-ended questioning to challenge and extend pupils' thinking and understanding. However, intervention and feedback to individual pupils are too inconsistent to help them to improve, and opportunities are missed for pupils to explore and discover different skills for themselves.
- Pupils have good opportunities to work with specialist coaches in some gymnastics, dance and games lessons. This is used effectively as an additional professional development opportunity for staff. The deployment of support teachers and teaching assistants is good and ensures all pupils, especially those with special educational needs and or disabilities, are engaged effectively in lessons and learning.
- Teachers complete pupils' assessments at the end of each unit of work based on learning objectives. Leaders have identified this as a priority for development, including the moderation of judgements, collation of data and monitoring of pupils' progress. Reports to parents/carers include an effective combination of pupils' experiences, progress and most identify an area for improvement.

Quality of the curriculum in PE

The quality of the PE curriculum is satisfactory.

- All pupils receive two hours of PE each week and about half already meet the Government expectation for three hours of PE and school sport every week.

- All National Curriculum requirements are met, although the focus on invasion games is too high. Not enough opportunities are planned for pupils to develop skills in playing games over a net or against a wall. A number of non-traditional activities, such as kabadi and lacrosse, have been introduced to engage pupils further.
- Schemes of work are being developed to add detail on learning intentions and success criteria. Currently, they do not give enough information to support teaching fully. Good links are starting to emerge with other subjects, particularly in science investigations on the relationship between leg length and speed and with literacy through the 'power of reading' programme.
- The good extra-curricular and enrichment programmes enable pupils to experience a broad range of activities throughout the year. Links with local sports clubs are increasing. These provide more able and gifted pupils with particularly good opportunities such as accessing cricket Chance2shine or diving talent identification programmes.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in PE

The effectiveness of leadership and management in PE is satisfactory.

- You, other senior leaders and the partnership arrangement with another local school provide excellent support to subject leaders. As a result, strengths and key priorities for development are identified accurately and are translated into an effective action plan.
- Some informal monitoring and sharing of good practice have been completed by the subject leader. However, these have not been focused sharply enough on pupils' outcomes. The subject leader is well informed of PE and school sport initiatives and has good subject knowledge. However, these have yet to be used fully in leading the subject.
- A good programme of professional development improves teachers' subject knowledge and increases their confidence and competence in teaching PE. This has yet to impact on raising attainment further.
- Good links with the school sports partnership have increased provision further through more extra-curricular clubs, the engagement of specialist coaches, professional development courses for subject leaders and other staff and through pupils' increased participation in festivals and tournaments.
- The profile of PE is good. Displays and celebrations of pupils' achievements are visible around the school and a good range of climbing apparatus and sports equipment is available during play and lunchtimes.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- increasing the effectiveness of leadership and management through:
 - opportunities to monitor and evaluate the impact of planned improvements on pupils' outcomes

- developing schemes of work to support teaching and pupils' learning
- improving the quality of teaching by:
 - placing a greater focus on learning
 - increasing the level of intervention to improve pupils' skills and understanding

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop PE 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 under the URN for your school. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Judith Rundle
Her Majesty's Inspector