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Ms A Holland
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Holland

Ofsted 2010–11 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 June and 1 July 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 without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included interviews with staff and students, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of students' work and observation of six lessons and extra-curricular activities.

The overall effectiveness of PE is outstanding.

Achievement in PE

Achievement in PE is outstanding.

- Attainment is well above average by the end of Key Stages 3 and 4 and in the sixth form. Results in all examination courses have been well above average overall for the last three years. Work observed in lessons indicates these very high standards are being maintained in all age groups. Students taking GCSE PE are on target to attain the school's highest PE results. High numbers attain sporting excellence and success in a broad range of team activities and/or as individuals.
- Progress in lessons is exceptional because of the very high quality of teaching. From below average starting points, students develop physical skills and an in-depth knowledge of the subject rapidly. Students become highly confident and competent performers during their time at the school.

- Students have extremely high levels of skills in observing each other's performances and then working collaboratively to improve work further. They show exceptional levels of independence in their work and are given a multitude of opportunities to initiate their own learning that includes setting their own learning objectives and outcomes.
- Students show high levels of engagement and perseverance to improve their performance. Attitudes to the subjects are consistently positive in all age groups and this is reflected in high participation rates in lessons and extra-curricular activities. They develop highly effective communication, teamwork and personal learning and thinking skills through PE. Students have a wide range of opportunities to take leadership roles in lessons and in extra-curricular activities, resulting in high numbers volunteering to work with younger students and local primary schools. The student voice is sought regularly through questionnaires and discussion and responded to positively.

Quality of teaching in PE

The quality of teaching in PE is outstanding.

- Teaching is of an exceptionally high standard across the department. All staff have very high expectations of students' verbal and physical engagement in lessons and consistently challenge students to attain their best in a broad range of activities and roles. Relationships are outstanding and students appreciate the high levels of commitment staff give to them and the subject. As a result, students are inspired and passionate about PE and have an in-depth understanding of their progress and achievements.
- An excellent range of teaching methods is employed that engages and motivates students to want to learn. Problem-solving, guided discovery and peer-teaching activities are combined effectively with direct teaching, and students are encouraged to set their own learning outcomes. As a result, lessons are exciting, stimulating and lead to outstanding progress.
- The range of differentiated tasks and resources is extensive and reflects how well teachers and teaching assistants know and meet individual student's needs.
- Assessment procedures are thorough for Key Stage 3 and examination courses. They include students' self- and peer-assessment, staff moderation, and the monitoring and analysis of assessment data. This analysis is used rigorously to identify the future learning needs of students and/or departmental improvements. However, these procedures are not extended into core Key Stage 4 PE lessons. Students of all ages receive comprehensive feedback from all teachers' observations and interventions which enables them to fully understand their next steps in learning.
- Students' use of assessment for learning booklets is innovative and enables them to fully understand the place of assessment and evaluation in their learning. One student said, 'it is good to assess periodically so you

don't miss an opportunity to get better and we know where we need to get to and how to get there'.

Quality of the curriculum in PE

The quality of the PE curriculum is outstanding.

- The curriculum and extra-curricular programmes are designed very well to meet the needs and interests of students. They provide memorable experiences that support learning. One such experience was described as, 'I'll always be able to remember circulation and the heart because I'll be visualising moving around gymnastic boxes and trampolines, exchanging red and blue balloons'. Every opportunity is taken for cross-subject development, for example in literacy, health and nutrition. New National Curriculum requirements have been fully adapted into units of work. Students are very enthusiastic about the opportunities for sports tours and presentation evenings that recognise their many successes.
- Nearly all students have two hours of PE in the curriculum and the department finds as many opportunities as possible to ensure the majority of Key Stage 4 students reach the government expectation for three hours of PE and school sport each week. Sixth-form students have a compulsory afternoon of games that includes high-quality team games alongside more recreational activities.
- Provision for gifted and talented students and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities is extensive in lessons and extra-curricular activities. Netball, gymnastics and boccia clubs are available for gifted students and excellent individual support is provided by teaching assistants for physically disabled students to ensure they are fully included and make progress in their skill development. The 'Fit for Life' club is championed well by staff in the PE and the special educational needs departments.
- The school sport partnership and extended school provision have significantly enhanced enrichment opportunities. The partnership has introduced a power kite club, gifted and talented workshops and leadership qualifications. Extended school status has enabled higher participation rates in sports clubs, including multi-skills for physically disabled students and summer programmes, through the funding of transport.
- The department is extending examination opportunities further, following requests from students, with the introduction of twilight sessions for GCSE dance from September 2010 that replicates the model used by the school's specialist subjects.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in PE

The effectiveness of leadership and management in PE is outstanding.

- Leadership is inspiring and results in a department that has a strong sense of purpose, shared vision and is proactive in its ambition for continuous

improvement. Staff are innovative in their teaching and seeking out of opportunities for students. One student summed up what many said about the subject; 'in PE we have an amazing experience'.

- An effective programme of monitoring and evaluation activities leads to a secure view of the strengths of the department. Priorities for development are translated into an effective action plan that focuses firmly on raising standards even further and is successful in ensuring consistently high-quality provision. Excellent opportunities are in place for staff to use and share their expertise, particularly through professional development activities.
- PE has a very high profile in and around the school and within the local community. Staff have established extensive links with local sports clubs. Students know the benefits of the subject and, consequently, show high levels of commitment to school teams and external club activities.
- Facilities have improved significantly in recent years. A full size astro-turf pitch and a new sports hall have extended sporting opportunities further. As one older student said, 'if it wasn't for hockey on the astro-turf, I probably wouldn't be involved in a club and taking coaching qualifications'. International links with India are being used to introduce new sports, such as Kabbadi for Cotswold students and netball in Indian schools.

The area for improvement, which we discussed, includes:

- exploring and introducing assessment procedures into core Key Stage 4 lessons.

I hope that 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