

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



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Miss Y Limb
Headteacher
Springwater School
Hugh Street
Starbeck
Harrogate
HG2 7LW

Dear Miss Limb

Ofsted 2010-11 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 11 and 12 May 2010 to look at work in PSHE education.

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: discussions with pupils, governors and staff; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of lessons and other activities.

The overall effectiveness of PSHE education is good.

Achievement in PSHE education

Achievement in PSHE education is good.

- All pupils, irrespective of their special educational needs, including those on the autistic spectrum, learn how to make sensible choices about their health, well-being and personal safety.
- Pupils' personal development is good overall, and outstanding for sixth-form students, as exemplified by their involvement with their peers in other schools and within the local community.
- Pupils have an appropriate understanding of how their bodies are developing. This is exemplified by sixth-form students' personal presentation skills, such as hair grooming and pedicures.

- Pupils know how important it is to eat healthily and benefit from the opportunities to grow and cook food.
- Pupils on the autistic spectrum particularly enjoy the daily healthy snack routine where they have the opportunity to develop their independent skills by pretending to buy their snacks.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the world of work as a result of the school's extensive links with its neighbourhood.

Quality of teaching of PSHE education

The quality of teaching of PSHE education is good.

- The lessons and activities seen all had strong features. These included the quality of relationships between adults and pupils and the excellent teamwork between the teachers and teaching assistants.
- Teachers' assessment of pupils is good and they use this information well to plan an effective curriculum in Key Stages 1 to 4, and an excellent curriculum for sixth-form students.
- Teachers make good use of the local environment, including the 'woodland walk', to develop pupils' awareness of the world around them.
- Teachers provide parents with very helpful information about their children's progress in the subject.
- Pupils benefit from excellent attention to their personal care routines, including from the team of personal care assistants.

Quality of the curriculum in PSHE education

The quality of the PSHE education curriculum is good.

- Provision for pupils' learning is good. Provision for their personal care is excellent, particularly as a result of the work of the personal care assistants who provide support for several hours a day.
- Pupils' personal and social development are good as a result of the explicit emphasis teachers give to developing pupils' independent and organisational skills, especially in the sixth form.
- Sixth-form provision in the subject is very clearly based on the identification of the skills pupils need, but this is less secure for other pupils.
- Sixth-form students receive external accreditation for their achievements. However, 14 to 16-year-olds do not.
- Good support is given to help pupils to understand how to travel safely and how to safeguard their personal space.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in PSHE education

The leadership and management of PSHE education are good.

- PSHE education underpins the work of the school as a result of the commitment from the school's managers and governors.
- The school's managers have high expectations. They are self-critical and seek improvement at every turn. This is exemplified by the rigorous programme of lesson observation in PSHE education which is moderated by an external partner.
- The school's managers use resources effectively and creatively. This is exemplified by the excellent use of teaching assistants who respond positively to the responsibility of leading key activities.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring planning for pupils' needs in Key Stages 1 to 4 matches the good planning for sixth-form students
- improving accreditation for 14 to 16-year-old pupils.

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 under the URN for your school. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Henry Moreton
Additional Inspector