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Mrs J Birch
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Birch

Ofsted 2010–11 subject survey inspection programme: personal, social, and health education (PSHE)

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and pupils, during my visit on 2 July 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 without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included interviews with you, staff, pupils and two governors, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of two lessons.

The overall effectiveness of PSHE is outstanding.

Achievement in PSHE

Achievement in PSHE is outstanding.

- Pupils are extremely confident, caring and very reflective. They work together extremely well, listen to each other carefully and value other's contributions.
- Pupils have a very good knowledge of different emotions, how to recognise them in others and they understand how others feel. They are able to think independently and they manage their emotions very well.
- Pupils are making very good progress in learning how to stay safe. For example, they understand the importance of road safety and remind their parents about the rules. They know how to assess potentially risky situations, for example, when near water, and they know what they should do.

- Pupils have a very good knowledge of how to stay healthy and know what makes a balanced diet. They know the importance of five fruit and vegetables a day and the need to drink water regularly.
- Pupils know how important exercise is and what they need to do to stay healthy. They know the importance of raising their pulse rate and warm-up activities before physical exercise.
- For their age, pupils have a very good understanding of the dangers and effects of drugs, including tobacco and alcohol. Older pupils have a basic knowledge about body changes and the importance and value of family relationships.
- All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress in these areas. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, including those with English as an additional language, are included well and also make good progress.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the world of work and how to manage their pocket money. They have good opportunities for putting their skills into practice, for example when managing their money on school residential trips or through charitable fundraising activities.

Quality of teaching of PSHE

The quality of teaching of PSHE is good.

- Teachers have extremely positive and purposeful relationships with pupils. They manage their behaviour very well, so lessons run smoothly and pupils can concentrate.
- Lessons are planned thoughtfully to provide a variety of activities, and introductions are good. In one of the lessons observed, the teacher made good use of two puppets to help Year 2 pupils think about what they should take to the beach to stay safe in the sun.
- Teachers make good use of questions to help pupils to develop and extend their ideas. They listen to pupils' answers and then use subsequent questions to explore issues in more depth. However, occasionally pupils are kept listening for too long. As a result, the pace of the lesson slows and pupils begin to lose their concentration.
- Teaching assistants make a very good contribution to lessons through specific help, observations of individual pupils and working with groups on specific tasks.
- There is some inconsistency in teaching, so lessons are not all as active and interesting as the best.
- Assessment is at an early stage, so systems do not show pupils' progress in PSHE. However, pupils' self-assessment is used well, which helps them to reflect on their own work.

Quality of the curriculum in PSHE

The PSHE curriculum is outstanding.

- Pupils benefit from a very well-planned programme that is centred around the Catholic ethos and values of the school.
- Other subjects make a very good contribution to PSHE through well-planned themes, making learning more interesting and relevant for pupils.
- The use of social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) materials is very effectively incorporated and has had a significant impact on improving pupils' emotional development.
- The school achieved the Healthy Schools award a few years ago. Its impact can still be seen in the healthy lunches and snacks that are provided for pupils.
- Very good use is made of a wide range of trips and visitors to help make learning more interesting, relevant and enjoyable. It also provides pupils with opportunities to practise their personal and social skills.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in PSHE

The leadership and management of PSHE are outstanding.

- The subject is being developed enthusiastically. It is strongly supported by senior managers and is having a clear impact on pupils' personal development.
- A clear and accurate understanding of the strengths and areas for development is reflected in school action planning and training of staff.
- Rigorous and thorough monitoring of the subject is used to inform future action plans.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- improving the quality of teaching so it is consistently as good as the best.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop PSHE in the school.

As I explained previously, a copy of this letter 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

Susan Orpin
Additional Inspector