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Mrs H Rockhold
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Rockhold

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 26 May 2010 to look at work in PSHE.

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, a parent-governor and pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of five lessons and an assembly.

The overall effectiveness of PSHE is outstanding.

Achievement in PSHE

Achievement in PSHE is outstanding.

- Pupils have excellent knowledge and understanding of how to stay safe and healthy. Even the pupils in Year 2 know what is meant by a balanced diet. Older pupils know which foods to restrict and the reasons for eating fruit and vegetables. Pupils understand the need for exercise and they participate enthusiastically in the dance sessions at the start of the day.
- Pupils know how to stay safe on the roads and on public transport. They have studied basic first aid and know what to do in an emergency. They have a good awareness of the dangers of drug misuse, including alcohol and tobacco, but are not quite as sure about the dangers of sniffing volatile substances.
- Older pupils understand the physical changes that come with puberty.

- Pupils have used drama techniques to practise resisting peer-group pressure and know about different sorts of bullying and how they can get help. In Year 3, pupils have a good understanding of methods they can use to make themselves feel better in times of stress or upset.
- Pupils are well prepared for future economic well-being through links with business and universities.
- Personal development is outstanding. Pupils have highly developed communication skills and they are able to confidently express their own emotions and convey empathy for others. They are able to reflect on their feelings about a range of issues constructively.

Quality of teaching of PSHE

The quality of teaching of PSHE is outstanding.

- Common features of the lessons observed were the fostering of self-confidence and self-esteem, creativity, independent learning and a very high level of care for individual pupils.
- An excellent range of methods and techniques is employed, such as games, talking partners, circle time, dance and drumming, to involve and stimulate all the pupils whatever their level of ability.
- The work of the teaching assistants is outstanding. They are proactive and fully engaged in helping pupils to learn and develop through listening to them talk and extending their vocabulary.
- Informal assessment is ongoing as teachers know pupils very well, but no formal system is in place.

Quality of the curriculum in PSHE

The quality of the PSHE curriculum is outstanding.

- PSHE learning is truly embedded throughout the curriculum, as can be seen in the outstanding display work throughout the school. Additional discrete lessons, based on a scheme called Second Steps and social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL), are also taught.
- The curriculum is responsive to the particular needs of the pupils and the local area. There is an excellent focus on the development of social and emotional skills.
- The curriculum provides a wealth of activities and opportunities for pupils to develop, practice and apply their PSHE learning.
- Pupils with different levels of ability and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those from diverse cultural backgrounds are all included well and are integrated extremely well.
- PSHE is supported and underpinned by the achievement of the Healthy Schools award which has focused the school on PSHE across the school as well as improving healthy eating.

- Outstanding use is made of external agencies to enhance learning in PSHE. An excellent example of this is the Medical Science Week when medical personnel visit the school to explain their work and the pupils visit Doctors' surgeries and hospitals.
- The school's specialist status as a School of Creativity has had a massive impact on the school's approach to teaching PSHE in an exciting and creative way.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in PSHE

The leadership and management of PSHE are outstanding.

- You have been successful, as the subject coordinator, in placing PSHE at the heart of the curriculum. PSHE is included in the school development plan and has high status.
- The school has used support from the local authority well and accessed some useful training such as Philosophy for Children, restorative justice and bereavement counselling. However, no one has yet achieved the PSHE certificate.
- The school has an extremely accurate picture of the standard of its work in PSHE. This picture has been formed by informal observation and the nature of the outcomes in terms of pupils' outstanding development. No formal monitoring of PSHE lessons takes place.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- exploring more formal systems of assessment and monitoring to maintain the current high levels of performance.

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

Margaret Jones
Her Majesty's Inspector