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Ms S Maguire
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Maguire

Ofsted 2010-11 subject survey inspection programme: citizenship

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and students, during my visit on 7 and 8 June 2010 to look at work in citizenship.

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 nine part-lessons.

The overall effectiveness of citizenship is good.

Achievement in citizenship

Achievement and enjoyment of learning in citizenship are satisfactory overall, with some significant strengths.

- This judgement reflects the current imbalance in students' experience of citizenship.
- Participation and action are areas of strength. All students participate in aspects of school life including membership of the school council, peer mentoring, whole-school campaigns, fundraising, international links and a wide range of other activities, many reflecting the school's specialism. Participation is assessed by tutors and students determine targets for improvement. Students are very positive about these opportunities.
- Students have very good opportunities to represent their peers and the school, including the layered school council and the Student Advisory Group. Student representatives also sit on the Harrow and National Youth Parliaments.

- Reflecting the current curriculum, students' knowledge and understanding of the citizenship programme of study are patchy. While they have achieved well in areas, such as UK diversity and aspects of global citizenship, their grasp of some aspects, such as democracy and justice and rights and responsibilities, is limited.
- In the lessons observed, students made good progress in activities related to citizenship. They worked well collaboratively and produced thoughtful solutions to problems. For example, students discussed methods of campaigning in a history lesson, moving from the anti-slavery campaigners to modern-day protests and methods.
- Assessment data indicate that girls are achieving more highly than boys and that students with statements of special educational needs and/or disabilities do better in citizenship than core subjects. Citizenship is highly inclusive. Steps are taken to identify groups of students less likely to participate and to ensure their involvement.
- The school takes the 'student voice' very seriously. For example, the school council suggested the development of social areas and lunchtime clubs. Students are involved in a wide range of consultations as well as taking part in activities such as interviewing prospective staff.

Quality of teaching in citizenship

The quality of teaching is good overall.

- Nine part-lessons were observed in six subject areas, as well as one tutor period. All of these lessons were linked to citizenship, but to different degrees.
- All lessons were characterised by good planning of sequences of learning, good relationships with students and a range of interesting tasks.
- In some lessons, teachers showed good citizenship subject knowledge, for example in giving the lesson current topical relevance or in drawing and building on aspects of students' citizenship knowledge and understanding. For example, work on water, oil and sustainability was planned well to lead to a campaign to reduce bottled water consumption; and a lesson on suffragettes looked at current campaigning methods.
- In some cases, the potential for citizenship learning was not fully exploited, for example to give students opportunities for advocacy or in setting research and written tasks to further explore the topical relevance of citizenship issues.
- Very good examples of the use of assessment for learning included lesson starter sessions to take account of students' understanding and to explain new learning objectives. Teachers maintained a close view of the progress students were making.
- Good examples were seen of assessed work with helpful feedback, such as work on identity and diversity in personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education and projects undertaken in religious education, which were separately assessed for citizenship. The tutors' role in assessing and

reporting on participation is also good. Although, overall, assessment in citizenship is underdeveloped, self-evaluation clearly signposts long-term development in this area.

- Currently, data on citizenship are collected and analysed from different subject areas and progress is reported to parents. This gives citizenship status and provides a broad overview of the progress of different groups.

Quality of the curriculum in citizenship

The quality of the citizenship curriculum is satisfactory.

- The school has promoted a cross-curricular approach that has raised awareness of citizenship effectively in subject departments and promoted the aims of the revised National Curriculum. This is manifested in schemes of work that make good links to citizenship. Some subjects, particularly geography, are in a good position to take responsibility for specific elements of the National Curriculum citizenship programme of study.
- The PSHE programme also includes citizenship, although some elements receive insufficient attention and little evidence exists of progression between Key Stages 3 and 4.
- Overall, the National Curriculum programme of study is covered unevenly and insufficient attention is paid to key areas of democracy and justice.
- However, the planned programme for a discrete citizenship course, starting in September 2010, gives due attention to these essential concepts and processes. Lessons have also been learned from this year's piloting of the short GCSE citizenship course in one tutor group.
- The taught curriculum is complemented by a wide array of extra-curricular activities and opportunities.
- Sixth-form students recognise the benefits of citizenship elements within the Certificate of Personal Effectiveness, particularly deciding on and organising a campaign.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in citizenship

The leadership and management of citizenship are good.

- Senior leaders have a strong vision for citizenship. This is demonstrated in the strengths evident in students' participation in the life of the school and taken forward in strategic decisions that are already tackling the issues raised above.
- The school's self-evaluation is detailed and accurate; complemented by plans for rapid but realistic development in teaching, the curriculum and assessment. The teachers' handbook is well advanced but would benefit from a section on teaching sensitive and controversial issues.
- The appointment of a specialist subject leader and the successful recruitment of two further specialist teachers indicate the extent to which school leaders have changed their approach to citizenship.

- Considerable work has already been done to ensure that new teaching programmes are in place for September 2010.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- continuing to develop and evaluate the core citizenship curriculum
- considering how the assessment of citizenship can produce a range of reliable and valid evidence of students' attainment
- continuing to develop citizenship across the curriculum, drawing on evaluation to identify transferable successes of teaching and learning in each subject area.

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

As I explained in my previous letter, 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

Scott Harrison
Additional Inspector