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Mr J Jackson  
Principal  
Launceston College  
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Dear Mr Jackson

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 8 and 9 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 students, staff and representatives from community groups; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of students' work; and observation of lessons.

The overall effectiveness of citizenship is good with outstanding features.

#### Achievement in citizenship

Achievement and enjoyment of learning in citizenship are good.

- Students enjoy citizenship education and generally have a good understanding of its underpinning concepts and principles. They recognise its relevance in wider settings.
- Students of all abilities are able to describe national and international news issues well and often express well-considered personal opinions. Their involvement in the active citizenship programme has exposed them to differing and, at times, opposing views on issues, such as homelessness and mental health, thereby enhancing their political understanding.
- The quality of written work is good. Extended projects enable students to develop their skills of enquiry and communication to good effect.

- There is clear differentiation and progression across year groups although gaps exist in, for example, students' knowledge about the role and function of charities and the voluntary sector.
- Attainment on the new AS-level citizenship studies course is improving after disappointing first-year results in 2009/10.

### Quality of teaching in citizenship

The quality of teaching in citizenship is good.

- In the best lessons, teachers successfully linked a variety of approaches including plenary, question and answer sessions and group work. They ensured that students had sufficient time to fulfil the tasks set and made good use of key words to extend students' citizenship vocabulary and consolidate their learning. Teachers are skilled in eliciting students' views and opinions, often actively encouraging them to justify their standpoints.
- The citizenship team benefits from being drawn from a broad range of subjects including religious education, humanities and English. Not all teachers, however, are sufficiently well versed in, or familiar with, the citizenship programme of study.
- Marking is sensitive and helpful to students and linked to level descriptors.
- Over a short period, rapid progress has been made in developing and improving assessment arrangements. Citizenship units identify assessment opportunities and are supported by specific criteria. Consideration is given to ensuring that assessment takes account of students' work in the areas of advocacy and representation as well as citizenship knowledge.

### Quality of the curriculum in citizenship

The quality of the citizenship curriculum is outstanding.

- The curriculum accommodates key citizenship concepts and processes and includes a strong element on active citizenship. It provides extended projects which enable students to carry out personal research; projects viewed covered the full ability range. Homework operates in a similar way, enabling students to work on a task over the six-week period of a citizenship unit.
- Schemes of learning and lesson plans are presented in an accessible format and support citizenship teachers well.
- Well-established global and international work, carried out across the college, complements citizenship education very well, particularly in relation to areas such as diversity, conflict resolution and social justice. 'Student voice' activities make an equally strong contribution to the curriculum.
- Community links also enrich the citizenship curriculum. The projects adopted by community organisations, such as campaigning, youth representation and inter-generational work, fit well with the college's citizenship learning objectives.

## Effectiveness of leadership and management in citizenship

The leadership and management of citizenship are outstanding.

- The head of humanities has adopted an objective and critical approach to managing citizenship. She has developed the curriculum in a systematic and comprehensive manner and introduced schemes of learning and monitoring, and support for non-specialist teachers. Citizenship education is maturing quickly and makes a distinctive contribution to the college.
- Improvements have been supported very well by the principal and senior managers.
- A recent review of the teaching and learning within the humanities faculty provides a detailed and critical appraisal of the subject. It is a responsive and forward-looking document strengthened by students' views.
- The college makes very good use of its strong community links established over many years.
- Links with higher education institutions in the region have had good reciprocal benefits. The college accommodates placements for students undertaking postgraduate studies in citizenship who in turn bring new ideas to the faculty.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- providing opportunities for non-specialist teachers to develop more experience in all aspects of teaching and learning in citizenship
- further refining assessment in the light of experience.

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

Tony Gallagher  
Her Majesty's Inspector