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Mr A Lund
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Dear Mr Lund

Ofsted 2010–11 subject survey inspection programme: citizenship

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit between 22 and 24 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: observation of six lessons, an assembly, a school council meeting, a student presentation and two tutorials; interviews with two groups of students; and four interviews with staff.

The overall effectiveness of citizenship is good.

Achievement in citizenship

Achievement in citizenship is good.

- Students have a good understanding of key areas of the curriculum. Their knowledge and understanding of rights and responsibilities, identity and diversity and environmental sustainability are particularly strong. A recent visit from the Parliamentary Education Team has broadened students' political awareness.
- Through a wide range of active citizenship projects, students learn how to research topics and communicate their findings. This is best illustrated in the work of the identity and diversity (Appleby Horse Fair) project and the South African exchange work.
- Students have good opportunities to participate and take responsibility. The school council is highly regarded; it is involved in improving the

environment as well as being consulted on important issues, such as the content of the sex and relationship education policy. Students also engage in teacher interviewing panels, primary school work experience, prefect and peer mentoring and the work of the anti-bullying committee. All are involved in student-led and highly successful, charity fundraising events.

- Students' evaluations show that citizenship lessons and activities often have a big impact on their understanding and attitudes. However, at both key stages, little evidence exists of sustained pieces of work in citizenship that are commensurate with their work in other National Curriculum subjects.
- The work undertaken by students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, is good. Students of all abilities enjoy citizenship and appreciate the important role it plays in their social, moral and cultural development.

Quality of teaching of citizenship

The quality of teaching in citizenship is good.

- Teachers use different approaches, and involve students in learning actively in citizenship. Good use is made of peer-learning as students present their project work to other year groups. Teaching by visitors and outside experts makes an excellent contribution. Students report activities, such as visiting theatre groups and the Parliamentary Education Team, as having a big impact on their learning and perceptions.
- Cross-curricular teaching is often good but not all teachers are sufficiently aware of the citizenship requirements to fully explore issues through effective questioning. Similarly, teaching in tutorial time makes a limited contribution to citizenship because teachers do not have adequate subject knowledge. Teachers use a range of relevant resources, including information and communication technology, and deal sensitively with controversial issues, such as racism and homophobia.
- Assessment in citizenship is at an early stage of development and teachers do not always understand how well students are doing or what needs to be done to help them make progress. Currently, no systems are in place to formally monitor progress in lessons or students' engagement in active citizenship. However, appropriate plans are in place to formalise assessment, recording and reporting in citizenship, in line with other National Curriculum subjects.

Quality of the curriculum in citizenship

The quality of the citizenship curriculum is satisfactory.

- The programme at Key Stage 3 adequately meets requirements. It is supported by work in other subjects, through curriculum days, extra-curricular activities, projects, trips, assemblies, visits and visitors. At Key Stage 4, the provision is more limited and dependent on students making particular option choices.

- Identity and diversity, rights and responsibilities, and the environment are covered in considerable depth across the curriculum. Law-related education, political literacy, and the role of the media are far less secure. Too few opportunities exist to revisit topics within and between key stages, although the general studies course in the sixth form helps students to build on understanding secured lower down the school.
- Current planning demonstrates awareness of the key concepts and processes in the new National Curriculum programme of study and provides an improved range of curriculum opportunities for students at both key stages.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in citizenship

The effectiveness of leadership and management in citizenship is good.

- Physical resources are appropriate but too little time is available to ensure the full curriculum entitlement at Key Stage 4. Staffing has improved over the years and a dedicated team of citizenship teachers is now in place. The subject leader accesses professional in-service training but little subject-specific training for team members has taken place.
- The subject leader does not have sufficient dedicated time to carry out thorough monitoring and evaluation of the citizenship provision. Lesson observations do not take place in citizenship. Insufficient time is available for team meetings and cross-curricular provision is not monitored for teaching and learning or to ensure that the curriculum entitlement is being met.
- The links between the school's citizenship programme and its outstanding community cohesion are very strong. The school gained the International School award last year and is working on a wide range of highly commendable local, national and international projects. The subject leader is well informed about citizenship requirements, has good awareness of the school's strengths and areas for development and enjoys the support of the senior leadership team. The plan to enhance her role from September 2010 suggests a good capacity to improve.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring curriculum entitlement at Key Stage 4
- developing assessment and recording of learning and progress
- developing monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning
- enabling subject-specific staff development for all those contributing to the citizenship programme.

I hope that 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

Janet Palmer
Her Majesty's Inspector