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Mr Long
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Dear Mr Long

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Physical Education

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 09 and 10 June 2009 to look at work in physical education (PE).

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the subject, the visit had a particular focus on assessing the PE contribution to the outcomes of Every Child Matters, particularly 'being healthy'.

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 schools but the individual schools will not be identified in the main text. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included interviews with staff and students and scrutiny of documentation, including samples of Key Stage 4 and Sixth Form examination work. I observed extra-curricular activities, a gifted and talented boys' dance workshop, swimming gala and 12 lessons.

The overall effectiveness of PE was judged to be outstanding. Students get a tremendous deal from your PE faculty and emerge from the school as confident, skilled performers with a genuine enthusiasm for PE and sport, which they say they will pursue into adulthood.

Achievement and standards

Students make outstanding progress overall and reach very high standards.

- From average starting points, students make good progress in PE and Dance and their attainment is above average by the end of Key Stage 3. Core Key Stage 4 progress is not tracked, but larger than average

cohorts excel in their achievements in GCSE PE and Dance. The proportion of students gaining the highest grades is significantly above average. Standards in A level PE and Dance are also well above average. However, there is a three year falling trend in students getting the top grades in PE and fewer than average students gained the best grades in AS PE and Dance.

- Students are securely acquiring the four core strands of the PE National Curriculum with little difference in boys' and girls' progress.
- School teams compete locally, regionally and nationally with some success in many sports. Individual accomplishments include a British record holder in swimming and a member of the 2012 Olympic training squad, alongside various county and district representatives.
- Students' personal development through PE is excellent. Participation rates in lessons, extra-curricular activities and school teams are very high and attitudes to learning and behaviour are first class. Students competently adopt leadership roles in lessons and as part of the Sports Leader and the Duke of Edinburgh awards. They work well together and are acquiring effective evaluative skills.

Quality of teaching and learning of PE

The teaching and learning observed was good with outstanding aspects.

- Students benefit from the expert knowledge of a team of 10 very committed and highly qualified PE specialists, who facilitate good and sometimes outstanding learning. Staff have developed an excellent rapport with students, who respond well to their dynamic delivery styles, high expectations and emphasis on making learning enjoyable.
- Lessons are meticulously planned, focused and vibrant. A very positive learning ethos has been established and there is a very good balance between staff support and guidance and the students taking responsibility for their own learning. As a consequence students make accelerated progress. They are skilful, reflective and knowledgeable. They have the confidence to be creative and are adept at problem solving and team working.
- Information and communication technology, learning aids and prompts, and adapted equipment were all used effectively to enrich students' learning experience.
- The faculty's recording, tracking and reporting procedures are good overall. Students acquire sound observation and analysis skills by assessing themselves and each other in order to evaluate and improve their performance. Staff regularly monitor the progress and attainment of Key Stage 3, GCSE and A level students, intervening when necessary to further support students. Core Key stage 4 students receive some useful feedback on their participation and engagement in PE.

Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is outstanding overall.

- The curriculum provides students with an excellent range of PE opportunities and experiences during Key Stages 3 and 4, with an increasing emphasis on matching activities and challenges to the specific needs of the students. There is an appropriate balance of time between the traditional games and the more artistic and aesthetic activities, with Dance having a particularly high profile and all students in Key Stage 3 experiencing at least one hour per week throughout the year. At present all Key Stage 3 students receive two hours of PE a week, while core provision at Key Stage 4 averages out at one and a half hours every two weeks, which is below government recommendations. However, as part of the school's recent revalidation for the Sportsmark award a survey confirmed that 63% of all students participated in at least five hours of PE and sport when extra-curricular participation was taken into account.
- An extensive extra-curricular programme enriches provision further with house competitions, sport tours and activities organised through the school sports partnership. School club links are also strong. There is an inclusive ethos with wide ranging competitive and non-competitive activities. Students can opt to take accreditation at GCSE and A level and gain officiating and coaching awards.
- Leadership opportunities are numerous and students act as peer mentors and activity organisers, working with students in local primary schools. Students also lead warm-ups in lessons. Schemes of work are detailed and of high quality and students' opinions are canvassed and help to shape the evolving programme. The lengths of units promote continuity and progression in students' learning.
- The enrichment programme is made possible by the good will of very committed staff and a team of coaches. Your school is fortunate to have a good range of PE accommodation and resources that support curriculum delivery effectively.
- At present the PE faculty do not fast-track able students into GCSE PE or provide a vocational option for students, although this has been offered in the past.

Leadership and management of PE

The quality and impact of leadership and management is outstanding overall.

- The profile and reputation of PE in the school and wider community is high and a tribute to the capable head of PE and his very strong team of staff. Their sphere of influence extends right across the school and includes a deputy head, assistant head and pastoral leaders. There is a team ethos among them and they share a common belief in the whole-school impact PE can have on students' well-being and performance.
- The head of PE is a positive role model for the subject and his professionalism is mirrored throughout the department. Planning is first rate and the expected policies and procedures are in place and of good quality. Schemes of work, action plans and new initiatives to further improve the quality of PE provision are informed by rigorous and candid monitoring of all aspects of the department's work. As a

consequence leaders hold a realistic view of the department's major strengths and areas for further improvement. Available resources are well deployed.

- The impact of leadership and management is reflected in the excellent progress and high standards students attain and in the high quality PE experience the department provide and which students covet.
- Your energy, commitment and vision in repositioning PE within a wider school context are noteworthy and have very much supported the success of PE in the school. Notwithstanding some further required refinements to provision there is excellent capacity to improve further.

Subject issue - PE contribution to the outcomes of Every Child Matters, particularly 'being healthy'

- Arrangements to support Every Child Matters outcomes through PE are very good. There is a strong emphasis on encouraging all students to participate regularly and achieve highly in PE, which they do. The PE department is very inclusive and staff have made special provision to further encourage the minority of students for whom PE is not their favourite subject. Students have a very good understanding of how to stay safe in PE. This was illustrated well during javelin lessons and during the walk from the lower to upper school site for PE lessons, which involved crossing roads with equipment. Student's enjoyment of Dance was very evident as they immersed themselves in the moment when practising their routine to Michael Jackson's 'Thriller'.
- Students develop very good key skills through PE. They learn to work effectively as part of a team, take leading roles and assess and interpret information to improve their own and others performance. They also develop their social and communication skills. All crucial attributes that will help secure their future economic well-being. Students also willingly make a positive contribution to the wider life of the school and local community, when representing the school in competitions and participating in dance productions. The PE department, together with the Every Child Matters team is successfully increasing students' awareness of the benefits of eating healthily and leading healthy lifestyles and the school has seen an increased uptake of healthier meals at lunchtime. This is reinforced by events such as 'ready, steady cook', where students cook alongside their parents. The school holds the Sportsmark award and participation rates in and outside of the curriculum are high.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- halting the decline in the proportion of students gaining the highest grades in A level and AS PE and AS Dance
- ways of giving students in core PE lessons at Key Stage 4 a sense of their achievement and standards during Years 10 and 11
- ensuring all students receive a two hour core entitlement to PE in line with government expectations.

I hope my observations are useful as you continue to develop PE in the school. A copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

John Young
Her Majesty's Inspector