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Mrs K Lamb
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Dear Mrs Lamb

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Physical Education

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on Tuesday 09 and Wednesday 10 October 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 the continuity of learning between key stages.

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. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included: interviews with staff and learners, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of students' work and observation of seven lessons, together with enrichment activities after school.

The overall effectiveness of physical education was judged to be satisfactory.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are satisfactory.

- Standards at the end of Key Stage 3 are close to the national average and in Key Stage 4 slightly below the national average. This judgement does not align with assessment by the school, which indicates standards at the end of Key Stage 3 being well above the national average.
- Achievement is satisfactory overall because at the time of entry standards are close to the national average.

- Results in GCSE fluctuate. They have improved over the last three years from a very low level in 2005. The number achieving higher A*-C grades remains below the national average and well below the overall average for the school itself. In 2007 the attainment of girls was higher than that of boys.
- In the work seen, skills, knowledge and understanding in Year 9 netball were good but racquet skills in Year 11 were weak. The ability to observe and give appropriate feedback and to apply knowledge in the use of tactics in games activities was also weak.
- About one sixth of students in Year 11 gain leadership qualifications. They use their new knowledge and skill to lead practical sessions in the local primary school.
- Students' attitudes to learning are outstanding. They enjoy PE, participation rates are very high and despite the poor facilities and accommodation for the subject, motivation and commitment are both excellent.

Quality of teaching and learning of PE

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

- Teaching was satisfactory overall and in a significant minority of lessons it was good. In the good lessons students were invited to make their own contributions and take on responsibilities.
- Lessons are conducted at good pace with a suitable balance between instruction and activity. Classes are well organised and managed. Teachers make good use of their subject knowledge and observational skills to identify weaknesses in performance and to provide coaching advice.
- The additional support offered by classroom assistants for the high proportion of students in the school with learning difficulties is a particular strength.
- Short term lesson planning is weak because it often fails to identify clear learning objectives or provide activities that are suitably matched to the wide ability range of students in each class.
- There is no system to track the progress of the great majority of students in Key Stage 4 core PE. Other than for GCSE, students are not set targets and they have little understanding of the level at which they are working, or what they must do to make further progress.
- In the leadership programme students discuss in great detail how activities can be modified to serve different purposes. However, this programme is the exception, too often questioning is superficial and responses that students provide are not used to deepen knowledge and understanding, or to shape the design of progressive tasks.

Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory.

- Being a small secondary school with no playing fields on-site or sports hall, places severe restraints on curriculum design and provision. Despite the limitations, the students appreciate the curriculum offered

and the commitment and hard work of their teachers. They feel they are well provided for in PE and particularly enjoy the competitive opportunities that have been provided.

- In Years 7 and 8 students receive slightly more than two hours of PE per week. In Year 9 and in Key Stage 4 core work the time provided is one hundred minutes, which is below the government target. Approximately one third of students add to their activity time through participation in enrichment opportunities at lunch time and after school.
- The 'double period' and small teaching groups add to the quality of learning in lessons. However, the value of these lessons is negated where students have to walk a considerable distance to off-site facilities.
- Increasingly the school is making effective use of external coaches and funding from the Physical Education School Sport and Club Links (PESSCL) strategy to widen provision and experiences at Key Stage 4. At the moment activities include cheer-leading and street dance but other 'taster' sessions have been introduced at various times. The leadership programme and BTEC course are important additions to the 'pathways' created.

Leadership and management of PE

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory.

- The head of department is committed to improving standards and raising the profile of the subject. Practical support through the PESSCL strategy has helped to accelerate this process.
- There is good support from other members of staff who work hard and share her commitment to improve standards, despite continued disappointment over the long wait for a new sports hall.
- The department runs smoothly and is managed efficiently. However, the withdrawal of the one permanent male member of staff to work two days each week as the School Sport Co-ordinator (SSCO) has disrupted continuity in the quality of learning for many students in the host school.
- Self-evaluation is not always underpinned by clear evidence and judgements are often over-generous, as in the case of standards by the end of Key Stage 3. The available data is not being used in any systematic way to address under-achievement.
- Monitoring and evaluation of lessons has not been sufficiently regular or incisive to identify weaknesses in learning. Consequently the subject improvement plan is inadequate because it provides no detail of how weaknesses are being addressed or the criteria against which future progress will be measured.

Continuity between key stages

- A series of enrichment activities provided through the SSCO programme have broadened primary school provision in and beyond the curriculum. Teachers say this work has contributed to the

improvement in standards at the time of transfer from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3.

- Neither the secondary school nor the primary school has any data to measure the impact of additional provision on standards.
- Apart from naming those students with particular talents and those experiencing learning difficulties, there is no system in place to record standards in PE at the time of transfer from primary to secondary school. The secondary school has no baseline from which to measure progress.
- The work of the secondary school young sports leaders with Year 5 and Year 6 pupils in the primary schools is helping to strengthen links between the schools.
- The links between Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 are strong. The games activities followed in Key Stage 3 can be taken as options in the GCSE course and the programme has been expanded to provide wider choices in leadership and vocational accreditation and in different sports and dance styles.

Inclusion

- Students are given equal entitlement to the curriculum but the poor accommodation and facilities on site restrict equal access. This is especially true on wet days and during examination periods.
- The presence of classroom assistants and the small size of teaching groups ensure all children receive the support they need in lessons. Despite this, tasks are not carefully selected or modified to match individual and small group needs.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- analysing GCSE data to identify those weaknesses contributing to under achievement
- using assessment of learning to plan tasks better suited to the ability range in each class
- more rigorous monitoring and evaluation of lessons and use of outcomes to write a subject improvement plan that is based on improving provision
- tracking the progress of all students, setting them individual targets and making clear what they must do to achieve them
- reviewing the use of time and funding provided through the PESSCL strategy.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop physical education 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. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

I Howard Todd
Additional Inspector