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Ms J Gilmour
Headteacher
Birdwell Primary School
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Dear Ms Gilmour

Ofsted 2011–12 subject survey inspection programme: physical education (PE)

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and pupils, during my visit on 27 September 2011 to look at work in PE.

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 pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; and observation of three lessons.

The overall effectiveness of PE is good.

Achievement in PE

Achievement in PE is good.

- All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stages 1 and 2. By the end of Year 6, attainment is above average. Pupils show a good level of fitness and most can swim the expected 25 metres. The large majority of pupils take part in after-school sports activities.
- Pupils behave well and enthusiastically engage in lessons. They show a good level of independence and apply themselves well to their tasks. Pupils have a well-developed understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe. Even the youngest pupils know how health can be promoted through eating sensibly and exercising regularly. The Year 6

play leaders' programme helps pupils to develop their social skills effectively through promoting physical activity for other pupils.

Quality of teaching in PE

The quality of teaching in PE is good.

- Strong relationships between teachers and pupils help to ensure a positive climate for learning. Teachers understand the value of PE and school sport and their enthusiasm is communicated well to pupils. External coaches are used to develop pupils' skills through after-school clubs and by working alongside staff to develop teachers' subject knowledge.
- In the best lessons, vigorous activity over sustained periods of time is combined with a sharp focus on improving pupils' skills. However, this is inconsistent and is the main reason why there is not an even greater proportion of good or outstanding teaching.
- In some classes, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage, information and communication technology (ICT) is used well to illustrate key skills and techniques and to enable pupils to analyse how they can improve their performance and that of others. However, the use of ICT in PE is not well developed throughout the school.

Quality of the curriculum in PE

The quality of the curriculum in PE is good.

- The curriculum is structured well and covers all areas of learning. It provides teachers with clear guidelines to promote progression of learning. Lessons often support work in other subjects.
- The two hours of timetabled weekly PE for all pupils is supplemented well by many enrichment activities, such as visits to Headingley Cricket Ground, participation in charity dance events and visits from sporting celebrities. The Friday specialised 'University' sessions give pupils opportunities to develop their skills in chosen areas.
- Outdoor and adventurous activities are provided for well through use of the school grounds and residential experiences. Inter-school matches give pupils of all abilities the chance to participate in competition.
- All children in the Early Years Foundation Stage take part in a daily programme to develop their gross motor skills. The school reports that, since the introduction of the programme, children's motor skills have improved significantly and children participate more willingly and confidently in PE lessons.
- The needs of the more able pupils are met well through activities in lessons which provide a higher degree of challenge, links with local specialist clubs and after-school clubs and competitions.
- Lunchtime activities, organised by the play leader and play worker, are planned well, and engage pupils in a variety of sports.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in PE

The effectiveness of leadership and management in PE is satisfactory

- The subject leader has supported teachers through advising on resources and lesson planning. His enthusiasm for PE and school sport has raised its profile throughout the school and his commitment has enthused pupils and staff. He has established strong links with other schools to share expertise and organise competitions.
- Pupils' progress is monitored and is used to provide information about the progress of individuals as they move through the school. The subject leader has undertaken reviews of staff strengths and areas for improvement and has organised and promoted training. However, he does not regularly or systematically undertake lesson observations and, consequently, the plans for improvement are not focused on improving the quality of pupils' learning in lessons.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- increasing the proportion of good and outstanding teaching by ensuring that in all lessons teachers engage pupils in vigorous activity over sustained periods of time and focus sharply on improving pupils' skills
- ensuring that the subject leader carries out regular and systematic monitoring of the quality of teaching, and plans for improvement are focused on improving the quality of pupils' learning in lessons
- making better use of ICT to illustrate key skills and techniques and to enable pupils to analyse how they can improve their performance and that of others.

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

As explained previously, a copy of this letter will be published on the Ofsted website. It may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection. A copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

Roy Bowers
Her Majesty's Inspector