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Mr J Lawrence  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Lawrence

**Ofsted 2011–12 subject survey inspection programme: personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE education)**

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and students, during my visit on 12 January 2012 to look at work in PSHE education.

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 students; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of students' work; and observation of three lessons and an assembly.

The overall effectiveness of PSHE education is satisfactory.

**Achievement in PSHE education**

Achievement in PSHE education is good.

- Students display great maturity and willingness to discuss sensitive issues. They are able to clearly and confidently articulate their views and feelings using skills and knowledge they have acquired across the curriculum.
- They are able to make value judgements about issues that affect their lives within the community and make appropriate choices to keep themselves safe and healthy.
- They learn a lot from visitors who are invited into school to talk to target groups. These include Amnesty International, officers from the local prison, and reformed drug users. These visits successfully bring aspects of

the real world to this isolated rural school community and help to shape students' views.

- Students have an appropriate knowledge of sex, relationships, drugs and alcohol education. They know the impact of drugs and alcohol on their bodies and are able to make individual choices and resist peer pressure.

### **Quality of teaching in PSHE education**

The quality of teaching in PSHE education is satisfactory with some good features.

- PSHE education is successfully taught through a range of subjects, notably science, drama, morality and ethics, and mathematics.
- In drama, sensitive issues are explored well through role play. Students tangibly grow in confidence and self-esteem when performing to their peers.
- The teaching of science is consistently good and students report positively about how their learning and understanding goes beyond science facts into emotional consideration of issues, implications and relevance to their lives.
- Food technology teaching provides good opportunities for students to design healthy meals. However, despite their knowledge of healthy foods, some students choose to make inappropriate choices at break and lunchtimes.
- In the less successful lessons observed, over-direction by the teacher does not sufficiently challenge students or focus sufficiently on new learning.
- Assessment of PSHEE remains an issue for the school. Opportunities to formally measure students' progress are insufficient.

### **Quality of the curriculum in PSHE education**

The quality of the curriculum in PSHE education is good.

- The curriculum has a discrete focus in Key Stage 4, especially through morality and ethics GCSE. Students are also able to make the links with PSHE education subject content from a wide range of subjects and school experiences.
- The curriculum at Key Stage 3 is less well planned and currently lacks clarity.
- The wide range of experiences provided throughout the school contributes significantly to students' development of personal skills and qualities. For example, the extensive use of visiting speakers, residential visits, extra-curricular clubs, the Duke of Edinburgh Award, and a wide range of charity work.
- There is no discrete PSHE education lesson each week. However, key subjects contribute well to the curriculum and whole-school deep-learning days successfully focus on key curriculum issues, such as preparation for

work, and sex and relationships education. These days are of high quality and delivered by national experts.

- A wide range of resources is used to support the curriculum.

### **Effectiveness of leadership and management in PSHE education**

The effectiveness of leadership and management in PSHE education is satisfactory.

- The subject leader brokers a wide range of external visitors to the 'Live Lounge' programme which is highly regarded and enjoyed by all students.
- Surveys of students' views are carefully analysed and well used to inform future actions.
- The subject leader builds effectively on the work of the external support for sex and relationships education to focus specific support on targeted groups.
- The mapping of PSHE education across the curriculum has not yet taken place in sufficient depth to ensure that all aspects of are covered in enough detail. The contribution of individual subjects is not sufficiently coordinated.
- The subject leader has the PSHE certificate qualification, but has yet to disseminate the key messages from the training to the rest of the staff to ensure effective leadership.

### **Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:**

- ensuring that the curriculum is thoroughly mapped through all subjects, especially science, mathematics, morality and ethics and drama
- ensuring that assessment is detailed and timely to inform curriculum design and meet the needs of different cohorts effectively
- developing the subject leader to ensure that management skills are used to best effect.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop PSHE education 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.

Yours sincerely

**Clive Kempton**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**