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21 May 2012

Ms E Meek
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Meek

Ofsted 2012–13 subject survey inspection programme: physical education (PE)

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 15 and 16 May 2012 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 six lessons and extra-curricular activities.

The overall effectiveness of PE is outstanding.

Achievement in PE

Achievement in PE is outstanding.

- All pupils make good and sustained progress over time from their low starting points, including in swimming, because of high-quality teaching. Small groups of pupils make rapid bursts of progress. For example, after the introduction of girls' only PE sessions a significant number have improved more than a whole level this year. A small minority of pupils attain National Curriculum levels although the majority attain well below national average because of their special educational needs.
- Pupils with moderate special educational needs acquire new skills rapidly in a broad range of activities. They show perseverance and determination to improve. They made excellent progress in one tennis lesson, from simple serving to hit targets through to successful transference of the skill into small game situations. Pupils with severe and profound special

educational needs also make good progress because work is appropriately matched to their needs and they benefit from excellent support from teachers and teaching assistants.

- Pupils demonstrate a thorough understanding of how to live an active healthy lifestyle. Pupils' evaluating and improving skills are good. More able pupils observe and recognise good features of others' performances and give specific suggestions on how to improve further. Pupils give genuine and spontaneous praise for each other's work. PE enables them to develop confidence and independence. All pupils spoken to say how much they enjoy PE because teachers make lessons fun, they try lots of new activities and are helped to get better.

Quality of teaching in PE

The quality of teaching in PE is outstanding.

- The subject leader teaches most PE lessons. She uses her excellent subject knowledge to set high expectations and provide challenge matched to the needs of all pupils with different abilities. The range of different activities in every lesson is extraordinary ensuring that every pupil has access to the specific support they need. The deployment of a specialist PE teaching assistant and other highly skilled teaching assistants for individual support is outstanding and ensures that all pupils are included, complete tasks and make progress.
- Staff are highly skilled at using questioning, observation and timely intervention to ensure that all pupils are actively engaged and understand when they are performing well and how to improve further. They give continuous encouragement and praise that reinforces expectations, embeds learning and leads to rapid and sustained progress. All pupils have well-planned opportunities to work collaboratively in pairs and small groups and individually. Excellent teacher demonstrations enable pupils to understand what they are aiming for. The pace of lessons is good with transition between tasks swift and well organised. Occasionally there is too much verbal input with too many instructions given at one time.
- The school has a wealth of data on pupils' progress over time based on comprehensive assessment procedures using P levels and National Curriculum levels. The specialist teaching assistant holds secure records of pupils' attainment and sets clear targets for the groups he teaches. However, as some aspects of this work are relatively new, links between PE and the teaching assistant assessments are not fully aligned. Good use is made of photographs and video clips to record and celebrate pupils' experiences and moderate progress.

Quality of the curriculum in PE

The quality of the curriculum in PE is outstanding.

- The curriculum is broad and is planned to meet the needs and interests of all pupils. Older pupils have excellent opportunities to make sensible suggestions for activities they want to experience. Staff respond positively

to this. Horse-riding is now offered to groups of older pupils and further education students. Pupils benefit from extensive onsite facilities, both indoors and outdoors, that enable them to be active throughout the day. They have excellent opportunities to use other local facilities for a broad range of activities including golf, swimming, table-tennis and fitness gymnasiums.

- All pupils access two hours of PE each week. The vast majority benefit from more physical activity through occupational therapy sessions, sensory circuits and additional sessions. The range of enrichment, including residential experiences for different age groups throughout the year, is outstanding. Pupils have extensive opportunities to participate in inter- and intra-school competitions and festivals of sport. They also benefit from working with specialists in Zumba, aerobics and external coaches in football and rugby. Reluctant participants or those unable to participate join the walking club every lunchtime. The school has recently gained one day's support each week from a schools sports coordinator who is successfully introducing sports leadership for different age groups.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in PE

The effectiveness of leadership and management in PE is outstanding.

- The subject leader has quickly developed an in-depth understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of PE and has set an ambitious plan for improvement. Action planning is focused well on improving provision further although misses the opportunity to have success criteria that evaluates the impact on pupils' outcomes.
- The subject leader models good practice in teaching. Her enthusiasm is infectious and is inspiring pupils to want to achieve more. She provides excellent support to colleagues and deploys teaching assistants very effectively. The profile of PE is high across the school and rising further. The subject leader has swiftly created productive links with other local special schools to support professional development for staff, including accurate assessment and moderation of pupils' progress.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- strengthening the links between the assessment information held in PE and the teaching assistant led sessions.

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

Judith Rundle

Her Majesty's Inspector