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17 July 2012

Mrs A Mackay
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Mackay

Ofsted 2012–13 subject survey inspection programme: personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE)

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 10 July 2012 to look at work in PSHE.

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; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of three lessons. It also included a series of brief lesson visits.

The overall effectiveness of PSHE is outstanding.

Achievement in PSHE

Achievement in PSHE is outstanding.

- From their low starting points, pupils make rapid and sustained progress during their time at the school. They develop strong and warm relationships with each other and with all the adults in the school. Pupils recognise that each person is, 'special and different'. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs thrive in this harmonious and respectful environment.
- Pupils are committed to adopting healthy lifestyles. They can describe how diet and exercise help them to remain in good health. They are equally knowledgeable about healthy ways of dealing with any worries they might have. Pupils have an excellent understanding of the physical and emotional aspects of sex and relationships which is appropriate to their

age and prepares them very well for changes they will experience during puberty.

- Pupils feel very safe and they know how to manage risk. They have an excellent understanding of how to use the internet safely. They are confident in identifying risks posed by fire, water and road use. They have a comprehensive understanding of the different forms of bullying and know what to do on the very rare occasions it happens in school.
- Pupils are rightly very proud of their school. They take their responsibility as citizens very seriously. For example, they adopt a high moral stance as consumers and say they prefer to buy Fairtrade goods because they are ethically produced.

Quality of teaching in PSHE

The quality of teaching in PSHE is outstanding.

- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and this gives them confidence to tackle sensitive issues extremely well. They provide a range of exciting and stimulating tasks which results in pupils being highly motivated and engaged. For example, in one lesson where teaching was outstanding, different groups of pupils used drama, art and discussion in working out how to make their games inclusive for disabled pupils.
- The work teachers provide is very well matched to the needs of the pupils. This is due in no small way to the outstandingly effective teaching assistants who are highly successful in their work with pupils who have specific needs. Good questioning skills ensure that pupils contribute well to discussions but they do not always have sufficient confidence to offer lengthy responses. External visits and visitors make a very valuable contribution to the quality of teaching in supporting pupils in raising their aspirations.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly and includes helpful comments. This helps pupils to understand what they have done well and the next steps they should take to improve their work. Examples of exemplary practice are demonstrated where pupils respond in writing to their teachers' comments.

Quality of the curriculum in PSHE

The quality of the curriculum in PSHE is outstanding.

- The thematic curriculum is broad and balanced. PSHE learning is at the heart of all the school does. Consequently, pupils consistently enjoy rich and memorable experiences. Enrichment supports their learning in the classroom outstandingly well. For example, pupils and their families thoroughly enjoy the preparation and participation in 'celebration days' during which pupils showcase their learning.
- Planning for the curriculum is detailed and tailored to pupils' changing needs. This builds very well on their previous learning so that their understanding deepens and extends as they move through the school.

Religious education plays a significant role in developing pupils' appreciation of their role as a global citizen.

- The curriculum makes an outstanding contribution to the development of pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. They routinely reflect on how they can put their faith into action. Pupils demonstrate this clearly in their thoughtful and caring relationships.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in PSHE

The effectiveness of leadership and management in PSHE is good.

- Leaders are committed to the subject and they have a clear vision for how it can be further developed. A wealth of expertise exists in the school and staff receive regular and high-quality training. Pupils, teachers and their parents and carers all place a high value on the contribution the subject makes to pupils' learning and development.
- The recently appointed coordinators are committed and enthusiastic. They have an accurate view of the areas requiring further development such as the monitoring and assessment systems which, though purposeful and informative, do not have the same level of rigour as other subjects.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring that monitoring and assessment arrangements reflect the rigour established for other subjects
- creating more consistent opportunities for pupils to construct extended responses during discussions.

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

Joan Hewitt
Her Majesty's Inspector