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Mr C King
Headteacher
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Dear Mr King

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

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and students, during my visit on 1 and 2 November 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 students; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of students' work; and observation of seven lessons and one physio-intervention session.

The overall effectiveness of PE is outstanding.

Achievement in PE

Achievement in PE is outstanding.

- Students achieve well in core PE, and exceptionally well in Key Stage 4 examination courses. There is very little difference between the achievement of boys and girls. A significant number of students have gained representative honours at district, county and national levels. The school's monitoring shows that the small number of students who undertake accreditation courses in the sixth form achieve well.
- Students have an excellent understanding of how exercise and a balanced diet contribute to health and fitness. Students make good progress in evaluating their own learning and that of others because of the emphasis placed on developing these skills in lessons.

- Students' personal development through PE is outstanding. Students show a high level of independence, work together exceptionally well and persevere when learning new skills. They eagerly participate in lessons and show very positive attitudes to PE and school sport. Students show strong leadership skills and demonstrate them through supporting others in lessons, officiating in competitions and coaching at after-schools clubs.

Quality of teaching in PE

The quality of teaching in PE is outstanding.

- Teaching is consistently good in core PE and outstanding in examination courses. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and are clearly passionate about promoting PE and school sport throughout the school. Their enthusiasm and commitment inspires students to do their best and try to succeed.
- Excellent relationships between teachers and students help ensure that lessons are calm and orderly. The few students who cannot participate in lessons are required to undertake tasks such as evaluating others' skills and suggesting how to improve to gain the next skill level.
- Students are given many opportunities to assess their own learning and that of others. The use of skill-cards in core PE lessons and clear success criteria in examination group lessons helps students to make accurate evaluations and give suggestions to their peers on how to improve.

Quality of the curriculum in PE

The quality of the curriculum in PE is outstanding.

- Students benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum which provides continuity and progression in their learning. Key Stage 4 students experience many activities including cheerleading and aerobics as well as more traditional games such as football, netball, cricket and hockey.
- The excellent range of extra-curricular activities provides high-quality learning experiences and is very well-supported by students from all year groups. Many house tournaments give students experience of competition in a variety of sports. School teams and individual students enjoy considerable success through the inter-school sport programme. Involvement in activities such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and Kielder Challenge gives students excellent opportunities to engage in challenging and memorable experiences.
- Higher attaining students extend and develop their skills through the wide range of enrichment opportunities, competitions and links with external clubs. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported exceptionally well, often through modification of apparatus and equipment, and use of teaching assistants to provide support in lessons. Selected students benefit greatly from involvement in the physio-intervention sessions where they engage in activities to improve their strength, flexibility, physical coordination, self-esteem and confidence.

- The school has recently introduced BTEC Sport courses for those students in Key Stages 4 and 5 who would benefit more from a vocational style of learning. However, the subject leader and senior leaders are aware that the courses are not embedded and have plans to develop them further.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in PE

The effectiveness of leadership and management in PE is outstanding.

- The school's senior leaders value PE and school sport highly. They recognise the contribution they make to students' personal development, enjoyment and health. All leaders are highly committed to building on current strong provision and raising standards. The support given to the newly appointed subject leader is helping her to develop quickly her monitoring and evaluation skills. Self-evaluation is strong and has accurately identified the main areas for improvement. Students' achievement is monitored well in Key Stage 3 core PE and in Key Stages 4 and 5 accreditation courses. However, the monitoring process is less rigorous in Key Stage 4 core PE and does not give teachers and students an accurate overview of students' achievements.
- PE and school sport have a very high profile around the school. The Woodrush Star and the Woodrush Sport Monthly help inform the students and local community about the many successes of individual students and sports teams. They also provide information about school sports festivals, fixtures and other news about PE and school sport activities.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring that the monitoring of students' progress in Key Stage 4 provides teachers and students with an accurate overview of their achievement in core PE
- fully implementing the plans to embed and further develop the vocational courses in Key Stages 4 and 5.

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.

Yours sincerely

Roy Bowers
Her Majesty's Inspector