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Mrs V Ford
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Ford

Ofsted 2010–11 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 22 and 23 September 2010 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 you and your subject leader; a meeting with a group of students; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of students' work and observation of eight lessons.

The overall effectiveness of PE is good.

Achievement in PE

Achievement in PE is good.

- Students make good progress in Key Stage 3 due to the good teaching across a wide range of activities. Attainment is consistently above national averages. In Key Stage 4, the majority of students continue to make good progress. They display good levels of fitness and a significant proportion train to become junior sports leaders. In games, some less able students make less progress than others because they lack a thorough grounding of basic ball and movement skills needed to outwit opponents effectively.
- Standards in GCSE PE improved significantly in 2010 to above national averages. Results in the recently introduced Sports Studies award are very high; all students attained a pass in the single and double award and almost half attained a merit in the single award. Attainment is less pronounced in the sixth form. The small proportion of students in Years 12

and 13 following the A-level course attain below average results, although this represents satisfactory progress from their starting points.

Quality of teaching in PE

The quality of teaching in PE is good.

- Teachers' high expectations of students are reflected in the standard of PE kit which is first class and all students wear it with pride. Behaviour is good because it is managed well. Teachers share good relations with students and use their expert subject knowledge to make learning interesting and enjoyable. For example, in a Year 11 trampolining lesson the teacher used an i-pad to show a video-clip of an elite performer which quickly helped students to understand the quality of movements expected.
- The quality of teaching varies from satisfactory to outstanding. The very best lessons include a wide range of methods to motivate students and promote their active learning. Not all lesson planning includes different tasks matched to the needs of students of lower ability, or sufficient opportunities for students to learn by themselves in small groups.
- Assessments are carried out by students and by teachers every three weeks; information is collated electronically to form a best-fit overview of how well individual students are achieving. Assessment criteria are shared with students on notice boards in PE facilities and verbally before self-assessments which gives them a good understanding of the expectations. This good practice does not extend into Year 11.

Quality of the curriculum in PE

The quality of the PE curriculum is good.

- All students have two hours of physical education weekly, including regular swimming lessons in Key Stage 3. An excellent range of enrichment activities including regular sports fixtures is provided and approximately 40% of students access at least three hours of PE and sport each week. In the sixth form, students participate in an hour of recreation or sports leadership training each week.
- Excellent planning and guidance documents support a high quality curriculum that enables the majority of students to enjoy and achieve well. It has breadth, balance and embraces the concepts and processes contained in new National Curriculum guidelines. Improving results in GCSE PE and vocational awards in Key stages 4 and 5 make a good contribution to raising attainment across the school.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in PE

The effectiveness of leadership and management in PE is outstanding.

- The subject leader uses her expertise and vision to instil confidence and commitment in her colleagues, and to give PE and sport a high profile in the school. Staff are kept informed by a weekly PE bulletin and excellent

newsletters to parents celebrate students' achievements in sport. Strong partnerships, including with the local school sport partnership help to widen opportunities for students and generate improvement.

- Thorough self-evaluation and development planning have driven improvements in recent years. Curriculum design and assessment procedures are both innovative and manageable, but more time is needed before they impact fully on the standards students achieve. Best practice is not fully shared across the department to increase the effectiveness of less experienced members of staff.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring that less able students acquire the basic ball and movement skills needed to outwit opponents effectively in games
- increasing the effectiveness of less experienced staff by modelling best practice.

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

As I 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. Except in the case of academies, a copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

John Mitcheson
Her Majesty's Inspector