

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



12 October 2011

Mr P Hughes
Acting Principal
Mossbourne Community Academy
Downs Park Road
Hackney
London
E5 8JY

Dear Mr Hughes

Ofsted 2011–12 subject survey inspection programme: citizenship

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and students during my visit on 27 and 28 September 2011 to look at work in citizenship.

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, an assembly and two external presentations.

The overall effectiveness of citizenship is outstanding.

Achievement in citizenship

Achievement in citizenship is outstanding.

- A powerful combination of excellent teaching through a thoughtful, imaginative curriculum combined with a school philosophy that everyone can succeed and make a difference, inspires students to strive for their best and achieve at an outstanding level.
- Students' behaviour and attitudes to learning are exemplary. They understand the school's commitment to help them to achieve highly and speak of the constant encouragement 'to be the best you can'. This extends beyond their academic studies to a mature understanding of how they can, through taking responsible action, make a difference in their school community and beyond.

- One of the key features is the vast range of opportunities for students to participate in citizenship projects, taking responsibility for the work of others. Their involvement in a full range of school and community projects such as peer mentors, senior prefects, charity fundraising, Olympic Ambassadors, and participation in an extensive range of community events, such as the National Citizen Service pilot, Eco group, Mossbourne Challenge and Model UN adds a rich dimension to citizenship learning.

Quality of teaching in citizenship

The quality of teaching in citizenship is outstanding.

- Observations centred on one of the school's 'off-timetable days' for citizenship. Teachers were observed to be highly effective; lessons were planned in depth and detail, with suitably personalised activities for different groups. The quality of resources and materials used were excellent, drawing on contemporary issues, engaging students in fruitful discussions on current affairs.
- Teachers are skilled in posing questions, prompting students to reflect on citizenship issues and discuss their views. They do this with confidence, respectfully considering the views of others. Consequently, dialogue in lessons is of an excellent quality.
- A variety of imaginative approaches are used effectively to promote students' engagement and enjoyment of learning, including pair and group work, lively discussions and the use of topical media clips to bring issues alive and focus students' attention on relevant world affairs.
- Thoughtful pairing of teachers on citizenship days is proving highly effective in enabling the sharing of approaches and development of expertise in tackling sensitive or controversial issues.

Quality of the curriculum in citizenship

The quality of the curriculum in citizenship is outstanding.

- The curriculum is thoughtful and well planned, mapped closely against the key concepts and processes and delivered effectively; partly through 'drop-down' citizenship days, reinforced strongly by a cross-curricular approach, most frequently through humanities lessons.
- 'Drop-down' citizenship days are highly successful in promoting excellent learning. These are carefully planned with reference to the citizenship requirements, using high-quality resources and include external speakers whenever appropriate. Students gain much from these days, engage well with the materials and speak enthusiastically about the subsequent learning. The focus is always on 'Issue, Action, and Change' so that personal reflection on how actions can bring about change is consistently reinforced. For example, a powerful presentation from a contributor who had lost her son through violent crime sharply and shockingly focused the attention of Year 7 students on the relevant issues. They moved on to explore their own thoughts and views on the safety of Hackney and the

actions individuals and groups might take to improve our communities. At times, progression in the powerful learning gained through these days is not systematically built upon after the event across the wider curriculum, which is an area for further development.

- Many departments make excellent contributions to citizenship learning, particularly within humanities. There is real commitment from teachers to deliver citizenship objectives and make the learning context real for students in their considerations of national and global issues.
- A rich range of extension and enrichment activities contributes strongly to citizenship learning. This includes carefully planned assemblies on relevant themes. Such assemblies promote empathy; students are encouraged to reflect on citizenship issues in the context of taking responsible action to bring about change.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in citizenship

The effectiveness of leadership and management in citizenship is outstanding.

- A clear vision for citizenship has a distinct and prominent profile in the life of the school. In keeping with the whole-school ethos, there is meticulous attention to detail in terms of clarification of the rationale for the subject, the focus of PSHEC days and the organisation of these.
- Subject leaders are enthusiastic, well organised and forward-thinking. They plan for citizenship learning in considerable detail, providing good support for teachers to deliver citizenship days effectively.
- The prominence of the student voice in school has strengthened recently. Students have a voice through the student council, which enjoys an improved profile in the school. Through this, students understand the principles of democracy and representation well and are able to draw parallels with democracy in action beyond school. They have a mature grasp of how to use due process to bring about change.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring that the learning achieved in the highly successful citizenship days is consolidated and extended through the cross-curricular provision.

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

Judith Matharu
Her Majesty's Inspector