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Mrs A Cockerham
Principal
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Dear Mrs Cockerham

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 18 and 19 January 2012 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 10 lessons.

The overall effectiveness of citizenship is satisfactory with good features.

Achievement in citizenship

Achievement in citizenship is good.

- Students' skills of enquiry and research are good. Many students are effective in using drama, creative writing, dance and other expressive arts as a means of exploring citizenship topics and expressing their views in a creative and engaging manner.
- In a fast-moving history lesson, some students readily compared and contrasted the rise of Nazism in pre-war Germany with current international conflicts. They accurately identified political regimes and articulated well the part played by propaganda then and now.
- Students achieve much through enrichment and community-related activities. All Year 8 students, for example, play a part in the annual Rye carnival through filming, puppetry, dance or costume design. This

promotes a positive image of young people in the community and, crucially, enables them to develop citizenship-related skills of participation and responsible action.

Quality of teaching in citizenship

The quality of teaching in citizenship is satisfactory.

- Teachers seek to incorporate citizenship education within a range of subjects but lack knowledge of the key concepts and processes underpinning the citizenship programme of study.
- In the better instances, teachers drew well on current affairs, often opportunistically, to support learning. In a lower-attaining geography group, the teacher simply introduced students to key terms such as international aid, taxation and charities. The citizenship content of a GCSE art group was well defined and linked seamlessly with explorations of social justice and the media. Overall, however, teachers lack experience in successfully incorporating citizenship aspects into lessons.
- Teachers link well with external agencies, many of which are very local, to support work in the classroom.
- Assessment and reporting procedures are underdeveloped.

Quality of the curriculum in citizenship

The quality of the curriculum in citizenship is satisfactory.

- The college promotes imaginative projects on themes such as disability and internationalism but the citizenship curriculum lacks coherence. It is not informed by citizenship's key concepts and processes.
- Resource materials to support teaching and learning have been insufficiently sourced and collated.
- Aspects of the curriculum which work well include the 'drop-down' days on topics such as the police, and rights and responsibilities. Topics vary according to what the college perceives to be necessary. Organisation of the annual town carnival has extended the reach of citizenship well and has become a strong conduit to involve students at all levels and of all abilities in their community.
- The strength of the curriculum is a reflection of how it has evolved over time. It does not, however, provide a balance in terms of student entitlement or allow distinctions to be made across key stages.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in citizenship

The effectiveness of leadership and management in citizenship is satisfactory with good features.

- As part of a successful overall improvement programme during recent years, the senior leadership team commissioned an external review of citizenship and personal, social and health education in 2011. This has led

to, among other actions, the imminent appointment of a citizenship lead teacher.

- Managers have introduced a good variety of citizenship-related activities and innovation to the college, but at present there is insufficient subject leadership and coordination, and a lack of external links with the citizenship professional community. These issues have limited progress in the subject.
- A subject assessment and an accompanying action plan for citizenship by managers are honest and their production has been a transparent process. This plan identifies appropriate actions to bring about further improvements.
- Productive community links have established two-way liaison with creative agencies, drawing on the college's skills, talents and resources. Support from governors for citizenship activities is good.
- There is good capacity for improvement.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- improving all aspects of subject leadership.

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. A copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

Tony Gallagher
Her Majesty's Inspector