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Mr R Anthony  
Associate Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Anthony

### **Ofsted 2012–13 subject survey inspection programme: citizenship**

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and students, during my visit on 16 and 17 May 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 lessons.

The overall effectiveness of citizenship is good.

#### **Achievement in citizenship**

Achievement in citizenship is good.

- Many students are able to articulate the part which citizenship plays in their education. They demonstrate a keen interest in current affairs, enjoy discussing topical issues and are well informed about the work of charities, Government and political parties. Most are able to express their views with confidence, but a minority are less engaged, lack an understanding of the issues being considered and are insufficiently secure in their own opinions.
- Students interviewed commented on how associating with migrant young people who attend The Hewett helps them learn about and put into context international conflict and its impact.
- The quality of written work within core citizenship lessons is good and demonstrates students' progress over time. The best writing combined

research and personal reflections by individuals on areas such as the nature of protest, the role of the media, and 'making yourself heard'.

- Students work effectively in groups and follow instructions well. On a few occasions, however, students sought to complete tasks without sufficient regard to learning about the citizenship elements.

### **Quality of teaching in citizenship**

The quality of teaching in citizenship is good.

- Teachers' understanding of citizenship concepts and processes, and how the subject links with other curriculum areas, is good. They are comfortable in tackling difficult and controversial issues and readily draw on current and topical issues to support learning. Teachers use well-conceived questioning to help develop students' understanding, along with techniques such as 'word boards' to expand students' knowledge and vocabulary.
- External specialists are used to deliver regular 'skills days' which incorporate aspects of citizenship. Their inputs are good and augment mainstream teaching well.
- Excellent progress in student assessment has been made over recent years. Teachers are confident and discerning in applying the full range of levels to students' written work, classroom contributions and overall progress. They keep assessment relatively straightforward and are turning their attention to enabling students to identify their own citizenship levels.
- The marking of students' work is very good and regular. Teacher's written comments are well judged to help students engage with the subject and improve. Marking is personalised and shows good knowledge of individuals.

### **Quality of the curriculum in citizenship**

The quality of the curriculum in citizenship is good.

- The curriculum is distinctive and has developed in an incremental manner over time. Delivery through core citizenship lessons, well-considered contributions from religious studies and 'skill days' works well. A strong community links programme further supports citizenship. There is a good sense of levels and progression across the curriculum.
- A small team of humanities teachers delivers the bulk of citizenship teaching. It is informed well by the subject's key concepts and processes.
- Team members have each helped devise curriculum materials and lesson plans. These resources are topic based, for example democracy, community and diversity. The topics are all valid but the devolved approach would be strengthened if tighter managerial oversight was applied to ensure that the programme of study is fully and consistently met.

- In addition to in-house materials, a good and well-used bank of curriculum resources is available to teachers.

### **Effectiveness of leadership and management in citizenship**

The effectiveness of leadership and management in citizenship is good.

- Citizenship education is prominent within the school. Managers have used broad citizenship activities well to support inclusion and they assert that a strong overarching role for citizenship has contributed to overall improvement in attainment evident across many subjects. Notable activities include the Hewett Awards, 'The Base' youth and family unit and sixth form volunteering. Students learn about the workings of the judicial system through 'partners against crime taskforce' (PACT) events.
- Attention is given to analysing performance in citizenship and undertaking classroom observations to sharpen practice.
- Subject leadership is good. The small citizenship team of humanities teachers is enthusiastic and collaborative and encourages initiative among its members. This approach helps cut down on possible duplication between citizenship and other related subjects. Citizenship-related specialist knowledge within the team is sufficient and links are made to external experts within the citizenship community nationally.
- Professional development and regular departmental meetings support improvement and aid networking.

### **Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:**

- ensuring managerial oversight of the curriculum
- considering approaches to engaging students in assessment.

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**