

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404045
F 0207 421 6855
www.ofsted.gov.uk



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Mrs B Wardle
Headteacher
Westbourne Primary School
Skinner Lane
Bradford
BD8 7PL

Dear Mrs Wardle

Ofsted survey inspection programme 2006/07- physical education

Survey on the impact of the Physical Education School Sport and Club links (PESSCL) strategy on improving the standards of swimming in schools.

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff and those of the Hanson/North Bradford School Sport Partnership, during my visit on Wednesday 07 March 2007 to look at work in swimming.

As outlined in my initial letter, the visit had a particular focus on the impact of the PESSCL strategy in improving the standards and quality of provision in swimming.

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. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included interviews with key staff and pupils and scrutiny of relevant documentation.

The overall effectiveness of swimming provision was judged to be inadequate.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are unsatisfactory.

- Almost all pupils, the majority of whom are from Pakistani backgrounds, start swimming lessons in Year 5 with no experience of swimming or swimming pools.
- Pupils make steady progress in gaining confidence during the lessons and most can swim at least five metres by the end of the programme.
- However, the length of time allocated to learning to swim is insufficient to enable most pupils to reach National Curriculum standards.
- Of the current Year 5 pupils who have just finished their programme of swimming lessons, just 35% have met the National Curriculum standards and 19% remain non-swimmers. This is similar to the standards reached in recent years, though precise information on standards in previous years is not available. There is no significant difference between the achievement of girls and boys.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe at the pool during swimming lessons. The vast majority of pupils enjoy their swimming lessons and are keen to learn.
- Absence, sometimes due to extended holidays or to Ramadan, has affected the progress of a small number of pupils. The school works hard with families to ensure that pupils attend regularly and take part in swimming lessons.
- Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have been well supported and have made good progress.

Quality of teaching and learning

No lessons were observed because the programme of swimming for the current Year 5 pupils had already been completed for this year.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

- Swimming lessons are taught by well qualified swimming teachers employed by Bradford City Swimming Development Unit (BCSDU). They are supported by a teacher from the school with a Level 1 qualification in swimming teaching and an experienced teaching assistant.
- 'Top-Up' funding has enabled the provision of an additional swimming teacher this year. The current ratio of swimming teachers to pupils, at around 1:15 plus school staff, enables pupils to be taught in reasonably sized groups that has led to positive relationships and pupils making at least satisfactory progress in lessons.
- In previous years, the teacher to pupil ratio was closer to 1:30 plus school staff. There is no clear indication that the improved ratio this year has helped to raise standards because they have not improved significantly.
- Pupils report that discipline is good and that they are taught how to keep themselves safe in the pool.
- Pupils say that lessons are enjoyable, and that they gain confidence in the water and learn basic strokes and personal survival skills.

- Swimming teachers assess and record pupils' progress against the various awards satisfactorily but individual pupils' starting points are not recorded clearly. Records and awards are passed on to teachers at the end of the programme. The school does not analyse pupils' progress closely during the programme to identify pupils that may need more support.
- Records of performance in previous years have not always been accurate and the school was not recognised by the Partnership as a low achieving school. Consequently some additional swimming experiences for pupils were not offered.

Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is unsatisfactory.

- The amount of time allocated to teaching swimming is not sufficient to enable enough pupils to reach National Curriculum standards.
- The current Year 5 have had additional time for swimming lessons this year compared to previous years. BCSDU allocated this on the basis of the school's previous low performance. The current Year 5 should have experienced 18 hours of lessons over the year but the time available for lessons was reduced to around 12 hours. This was because the lessons were initially scheduled at an inappropriate time for the school due to very limited availability of pool-time in this locality. The school worked with BCSDU and another local school to improve the arrangements but the time available for swimming lessons was still reduced significantly.
- A satisfactory scheme of work underpins the teaching and builds the required skills and understanding required to meet National Curriculum requirements.
- There is little planning to develop pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding across all four stands of the National Curriculum or to develop pupils' key skills such as speaking and listening.
- Pupils benefit from a half day programme on safety near water, but some have forgotten what to do because it is a long time since they were taught this.
- Lessons are appropriately taught in single sex groupings because most pupils are from Muslim backgrounds.
- The school ensures that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported and make progress.
- Swimming is provided in addition to the school's provision of other PE activities. Currently the school offers pupils 107 minutes of PE activity and there are plans in hand to increase this to 120 minutes.

Leadership and management of subject

The quality of leadership and management of swimming is unsatisfactory because it has not resulted in enough improvement in provision to raise standards significantly.

- You and your subject leader are keen to promote and improve the provision and standards in swimming, recognising its importance as a life skill for all pupils whatever their backgrounds. You are committed to ensuring that all children learn to swim whatever their backgrounds, circumstances or learning difficulties.
- Staff work hard with children and their families to overcome barriers to learning so that all pupils take part in lessons, make progress and enjoy the lessons.
- You and your subject leader monitor lessons and the school has an accurate understanding of the provision. Pupils' progress during the course of lessons is not as closely monitored.
- As a result of monitoring and negotiations with BCSDU, some improvements were made in the way the programme of lessons is scheduled. However, the difficulties in scheduling lessons meant that the school was not able to access the 18 hours of lessons that it was allocated and not enough pupils reached National Curriculum standards.
- There is a capacity to improve.

Subject issue - the impact of the PESSCL 'Top-Up' programme

The PESSCL 'Top-Up' programme has not had sufficient impact on swimming standards or provision in this school.

- The provision of an extra teacher for the Year 5 programme this year has not been sufficient to raise standards of swimming in this school. There remains a substantial proportion of pupils who have not reached National Curriculum standards by the end of the programme.
- The Partnership has offered additional swimming opportunities for pupils in low achieving schools during holiday time and after school hours. This was not offered to this school because the partnership did not have accurate information about pupils' standards.
- This school is in an isolated situation relative to other schools in the Partnership and much of the additional provision was not within a close vicinity of the school. The families of many pupils in this school would need much encouragement to support their children's involvement in swimming activities to be held out of school hours.
- The school has been offered 'Top-up' swimming sessions during school hours for Year 5 and 6 pupils who have not reached National Curriculum standards during summer term.

Inclusion

The school's arrangements for inclusion are good.

- The school does what it can to reduce barriers to learning for pupils.
- The school works hard to encourage the support of families of pupils without a tradition of swimming. They succeed in ensuring that all pupils take part in the programme.
- Single gender lessons are arranged to meet pupils' cultural needs.
- Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported during lessons and they make good progress. Where it is appropriate, swimming lessons are arranged for individual pupils at a different pool with a trained teaching assistant.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- raise standards in swimming by working closely with BCSDU and the Partnership to find ways to extend the provision of swimming lessons and maintain the recently improved teacher to pupil ratios
- ensure that records of pupils' progress are recorded accurately and passed on to the school more frequently to enable closer monitoring of pupils' progress and for pupils to receive their awards more frequently
- increase the dialogue between the Partnership and schools in order to identify individual pupils with the most need and the reasons why they have not achieved, in order that 'Top-Up' provision can be matched appropriately to them.

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

As I explained in my previous letter, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be published on Ofsted's website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Gillian Salter-Smith
Additional Inspector