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Mr P Jakszta  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Jakszta

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Physical Education

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 10 and 11 December to look at work in physical education (PE).

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the subject, the visit had a particular focus on the continuity of learning between key stages.

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 staff and learners, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of students' work and observation of six parts of lessons.

The overall effectiveness of physical education was judged to be good with outstanding features.

Achievement and standards

Achievement is good.

- Standards at the end of Key Stage 3 are above those expected for their age at both level 5 and level 6. Slightly more boys than girls attain the higher level.
- Accreditation results in dance and PE are above national averages and GCSE students frequently attain their highest examination results in PE. Good results are also attained in the Key Stage 4 BTec course. Work observed during the visit indicates that high standards are being maintained. However the number of students who attain the higher A\* - C grades in the sixth form are low.

- Many students from across the school attain district, county or national honours in PE.
- Progress in lessons is never less than good. Outstanding progress was seen in a Year 10 GCSE football lesson because of the quality of teaching.
- Students with specific learning needs are supported well in lessons and consequently they make the same progress as other students in the school. Pupils with English as an additional language are helped by the display of key PE words in different languages in working areas.
- Students have good opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of the four strands of the PE National Curriculum. They have particularly well-developed understanding of observing, evaluating and feeding back to others in order to improve skills and performance.
- Students have outstanding opportunities for personal development in PE. They complete an annual evaluation of provision and positive changes have been made as a result. These include amendments to the Key Stage 4 curriculum, the extra curricular programme and availability of water fountains in the PE area. Following requests from girls who completed GCSE dance, A Level dance has been introduced.
- Students thrive on the opportunities to take lead roles in primary school festivals and with younger students in both PE and dance. They show respect for each others' ideas during rehearsals for a school production using dance movements.
- Young sports ambassadors have been trained and have good opportunities to represent the school at international events and to work with adults as part of the School Sports Partnership to improve provision further.
- All students demonstrate great enthusiasm for PE in lessons and during extra curricular activities. They show diligence and perseverance to complete tasks to the best of their ability. Behaviour in PE lessons and around the PE area is exemplary.

## Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good with outstanding features.

- The majority of staff have excellent subject knowledge that they use extremely well to support students. The teaching of dance is a notable feature of the department's provision, although there is scope for better continuity of learning and transition between different teaching experiences in dance.
- All teachers use a good range of teaching methods to engage students in lessons. A few teachers demonstrate outstanding questioning techniques to challenge students' thinking and understanding of activities. Intervention to bring about improvements in students' work is always timely, based on accurate assessment of progress. Occasionally the pace of lessons drops when there is too much teacher input for extended periods.
- Teachers' planning is thorough and units of work are written to ensure good development of skills over time including the four strands of the PE National Curriculum.

- Students describe in detail how work is made harder to challenge them and to 'try and get the best out of you', or adapted for those finding a task difficult. All students say that teachers make learning fun and that 'everyone is included'.
- Although Information Communication Technology (ICT) is starting to be used in the department, teachers recognise that more could be done to expand this, especially to evaluate and improve students' work.
- Good procedures are in place for students unable to be physically active with observation, coaching and umpiring roles.

## Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good with outstanding features.

- All students in Key Stage 3, 4 and the sixth form have access to two hours of PE in the curriculum.
- The range of accreditation courses has improved with the introduction of BTec and dance. Preparation for theoretical aspects of GCSE PE and BTec courses through Key Stage 3 lessons is good. Students also have good opportunities to take leadership qualifications such as junior and community sports leaders.
- The Year 11 curriculum has improved through offering students greater choice of activities via four different pathways. Older students acknowledge the shift from traditional team games to a more varied diet of sport, both in lessons and as extra curricular activities, that better meets their interests and aspirations. They particularly mention dragon boating and kayaking.
- The Key Stage 3 and Year 10 curriculum has a good balance of games, gym and athletics although opportunities to study dance are more limited. The length of units of work enables good in-depth study and consequently students make good progress.
- The Year 7 curriculum had been adapted this year to enable students to catch up on basic skills and improve their hand-eye coordination.
- The programme of extra curricular activities is outstanding. Students have an extremely rich and varied programme throughout the year. Participation rates are high with nearly three quarters of pupils regularly attending clubs and team activities. Students enjoy the opportunities to be competitive in class and school teams and show genuine pleasure when recognising and celebrating others' success.
- A strength of provision is the link with Watford Football Club for the 'Playing for Success' and 'Double Club' programmes that use sport as a tool to improve literacy and numeracy skills.

## Leadership and management

The quality of leadership and management is outstanding.

- The combined forces of the Head of Department, Director of Specialism and the Partnership Development Manager are powerful in driving the aims of the specialist sports status forward. The Head of Department is ambitious to continuously improve provision, raise standards and

increase opportunities for PE and school sport. This combination of leaders shows excellent capacity to improve the subject even further.

- The Director of Specialism and Head of Department have excellent understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and have correctly identified key priorities for development. You and the line manager for PE offer good support and challenge to bring about changes at pace. Monitoring of the subject is good and findings are reflected honestly in the departments own self-review document, which reflects the department's vision for excellence. The departmental and specialist status action plans clearly reflect priorities for development and good links are made with whole school initiatives.
- The department has good procedures to assess and track students' progress over time from Year 7 to Year 10 and accredited courses, but these do not continue into Year 11. Early identification is made of students underachieving or at the borderline of C and D grade passes, with a good range of strategies identified to support their improvement. Due to these secure procedures and good use of National Curriculum levels of attainment in lessons, the vast majority of students know how well they are doing and what they need to do to get even better.

Subject issue: continuity of learning between key stages

- Limited information on PE achievements is transferred between primary schools and Nicholas Breakspear. However, plans are in place to tackle this as part of the School Sports Partnership programme.
- Primary pupils do however have good opportunities to access secondary facilities and to meet staff and older students via sports festivals and the district induction day to support transfer to the secondary school.
- The Year 7 PE curriculum has been adapted well to tackle identified areas of weakness or less experience in physical activities when students enter the school.

Inclusion

- Gifted and talented students are identified early for sporting prowess, coaching, leadership or academic success in PE. They have excellent opportunities to access extension activities such as a visit to Loughborough University to study aspects of PE and a cycling velodrome. Good information is given to parents on sports grants and cheap access to sports facilities for these elite athletes. Students welcome the mentoring programme that helps them maintain the balance between participation in sport and academic study.
- All students are fully engaged in lessons and all teachers have high expectations of participation and verbal input to lessons.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- finding ways to improve the continuity of learning in dance
- finding ways to assess, challenge and record students' PE achievements in Year 11
- increasing the use of ICT to improve standards in PE.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop physical education 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 the Ofsted website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Judith Rundle  
Her Majesty's Inspector