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Mr Atherton  
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Dear Mr Atherton

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Physical Education

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 24 January 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 assessing the PE contribution to the outcomes of Every Child Matters, particularly 'being healthy'.

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 pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation and observation of two lessons.

The overall effectiveness of physical education was judged satisfactory, with a number of good features.

#### Achievement and standards

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall as are the standards they reach by the time they leave the school.

- A significant minority of gifted and talented pupils reach very high standards and form the backbone of the highly successful school teams. Standards are also above average in swimming.
- Boys and girls achieve equally well overall, although boys tend to achieve less well in creative activities such as dance and gymnastics,

while girls do less well in games activities. Pupils generally displayed a greater ability to comprehend relevant techniques and concepts in PE, but were less proficient at putting this understanding into practice in practical situations.

- During lessons, most pupils showed excellent attitudes to learning and were well behaved. However, some younger pupils had a tendency to drift off task. Attendance and participation rates were high, and pupils worked well together in a range of paired and group activities.
- Pupils' awareness of healthy lifestyles is excellent and a strength of provision.

### Quality of teaching and learning of PE

In the small number of lessons seen, because of good teaching, pupils were making good progress towards lesson objectives.

- Teachers have developed good subject knowledge, by accessing a range of PE professional development opportunities. These have improved their confidence to teach the subject.
- Teachers deliver well-planned lessons, with clear learning objectives and suitable progressions, which are tailored to pupils' differing needs and informed by records of pupils' previous attainment.
- Teachers make good use of a range of learning approaches to stimulate and engage pupils in learning, which included pupils' taking some responsibility for their own learning that they enjoyed.
- Teachers are supportive of pupils and provide them with good levels of positive reinforcement, care, and guidance. Staff maintain on-going records of pupils' progress and discuss their individual requirements periodically. Pupils have good opportunities to self and peer assess in lessons, and receive feedback from teachers on their relative progress. However, staff found it difficult to substantiate collectively their view of pupils' achievement, as judgments are not moderated for consistency.
- Currently staff do not make best use of information and communication technology (ICT) in PE lessons to support pupils' learning, particularly when observing, and evaluating the standards pupils reach.

### Quality of the PE curriculum

Curriculum provision is good with some excellent features. It is broad, and offers pupils a balanced range of opportunities that cover all aspects of the National Curriculum.

- Pupils receive two hours of PE, and there is an appropriate balance between traditional games and the more creative activities such as dance and gymnastics.
- Through PE, teachers help pupils to recognise the links between different subjects, such as the gymnastics lesson that drew on music and reinforced the school's literacy strategy.
- A good range of extra curricular and enrichment activities are available to pupils, facilitated by some good club links, and the school's involvement in the local sports partnership. Pupils also benefit from a

residential experience, a lunchtime play leaders scheme and the daily 10 minute 'wake up and shake' sessions. The school also collapse the timetable to provide a week of sport bi-annually, based around the Commonwealth or Olympic games. Provision includes leisure-based activities as well as competitive opportunities for pupils, including some specific provision for gifted and talented performers.

- The school has a good range of indoor and outdoor spaces and PE equipment although the potential of the hall is limited by the amount of large apparatus stored around the perimeter.

## Leadership and management of PE

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall with a number of good features.

- Since her appointment, the subject coordinator has had a very good impact on the coordination and provision for PE within the school; consequently, the area runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. PE equipment and resources are well utilised, with good procedures in place to assure pupils' safety. Good quality schemes of work and curriculum plans are in place and staff have benefited from professional development opportunities. This PE specific training has increased the confidence with which staff now deliver the subject.
- The coordinator and other staff are committed to raising standards and the recent focus on using assessment to boost achievement is beginning to have an impact. The coordinator is given time to monitor teachers planning and to talk to pupils about their work but at present there is no formal evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning in PE, which would provide an overview of pupils' achievement and standards and highlight areas for development .
- The coordinator has a broadly accurate view of strengths and areas for development in PE. Although historically great emphasis has been placed on provision, she is acutely aware of the importance of ensuring pupil outcomes match their potential.
- Scrutiny of the PE action plan reveals a coherent improvement strategy. The subject leader has the capacity to deliver further improvements to the provision and overall effectiveness of PE in the school.

## Subject issue - PE contribution to the outcomes of Every Child Matters particularly, 'being healthy'

- Excellent arrangements are in place to encourage pupils to be healthy. The school has achieved national Healthy Schools accreditation and combined with effective provision through PSHCE, PE and science has raised pupils' awareness of what it means to be healthy and how to lead active and healthy lifestyles.
- A healthy tuck shop at break times, free fruit, and a restriction on fizzy drinks and high fat content meals at lunchtime are examples of measures introduced. An innovative biometric system of calculating pupils' calorific intake and linking it to a rewards programme based on

accumulating points for choosing healthy options has been particularly well received. This is in addition to the numerous opportunities available to take part in physical activity during and after school.

### Equality and diversity

- The schools arrangements to promote inclusion through PE are effective, and there is an appropriate emphasis on supporting the development of all pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills irrespective of ability.
- The breadth of curricular and extra curricular provision is also inclusive as it provides a range of non-traditional activities, which have a wider appeal and attract mass participation.
- The use of teaching assistants in lessons to support targeted pupils and a range of teaching approaches, including the use of adapted equipment, illustrates the commitment of PE to equality of access.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- raising pupils' achievement and the standards they reach
- making better use of ICT in PE to promote engagement and aid learning
- refining assessment procedures to include moderation of achievement judgements
- introducing formal monitoring of PE lessons
- freeing up space in the hall by finding alternative options for the storage of large pieces of PE apparatus.

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

John Young  
Her Majesty's Inspector