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Mrs F McGarry
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs McGarry

Ofsted 2011–12 subject survey inspection programme: physical education (PE)

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and students, during my visit on 12 and 13 January 2012 to look at work in PE.

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; observation of seven lessons; and several short observations of teaching and learning across the department.

The overall effectiveness of PE is good.

Achievement in PE

Achievement in PE is good.

- Evidence from lesson observations and a review of very detailed assessments confirm that students enter the school with skills that are in line with national expectations. Progress across Key Stages 3 and 4 is good and those following the GCSE course attain above average standards as a result of good or better teaching. Increasing numbers of students follow vocational courses to attain high standards at BTEC Diploma level.
- The vast majority of students achieve well in their physical, personal and social development because of the strong emphasis placed on sports leadership skills from Year 8. An increasing number of students gain qualifications in a number of sporting disciplines and accreditations in PE. Participation rates in both intra-

and inter-school competitive sport are high. Over half of all students take part in sport outside of lessons to maintain a healthy and active lifestyle.

- Students are very enthusiastic and behaviour in lessons is always good. Students demonstrate respect for each other by sensitively reflecting on the performance of others and helping and encouraging those who are less able. Those taking sports leader courses develop in confidence as they teach a range of PE skills to younger pupils from local primary schools. A small number of older students in Key Stage 5 continue this voluntary work as sports ambassadors both within the school and the local community.

Quality of teaching in PE

The quality of teaching in PE is good.

- Student behaviour is managed well in all lessons and teaching moves along briskly. All teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge and use questions well to check students' understanding. Drills and small-sided games are used well to reinforce key teaching points. Learning is regularly reviewed and the end lessons are used effectively to support assessment activity. Teachers make good use of information and communication technology (ICT) to illustrate key teaching points at the start of lessons. However, opportunities are sometimes missed to use other ICT applications to support assessment both within and at the end of lessons.
- Planning is consistently good. Clear objectives are shared with students to provide a good structure for learning and to support assessment. Staff monitor students' progress well and use this information to set targets and support subject review. Tasks are designed to meet the needs of students of different abilities but the needs of the most able are not always planned for in some lessons. When tasks are specifically targeted to their needs, as seen in an outstanding football lesson for Year 8 boys, their progress is rapid.
- All staff provide high-quality support and guidance to those students whose circumstances make them vulnerable and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Those students who are either gifted or talented in PE are given the necessary support and guidance to ensure that they reach their full potential. Many of these students perform at a high level at both local and regional level. For instance, some boys are members of football academies at professional clubs and the Year 11 girls' cricket team has won awards at both regional and national level.

Quality of the curriculum in PE

The quality of the curriculum in PE is good.

- A broad, balanced and inclusive curriculum is planned with a strong emphasis on sport leadership and vocational study. Students participate in at least two hours of PE and sport each week. Currently those in Year 11 not following a vocational course in PE have one hour of sport each week. No time is allocated in Key Stage 5 for those not following an accredited award in PE or sport. The school recognises the need to increase the opportunity for PE and school sport

for these students and extra time is to be allocated in the timetable at the start of the next academic year.

- Students follow vocational courses in PE from Year 9 with many following BTEC Sport at Key Stage 5. An extensive range of extra-curricular sporting activities provides further opportunities to participate and all students are encouraged to engage in intra-school sporting events and competitive fixtures.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in PE

The effectiveness of leadership and management in PE is outstanding.

- The department is led extremely well by a dedicated head of department who has been instrumental in improving the provision. For instance, the introduction and development of students' leadership skills through sport makes an outstanding contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Roles and responsibilities are delegated effectively within the staff team. Self-evaluation is accurate and based on detailed annual reviews that include the views of students and staff. This, in conjunction with frequent monitoring of teaching and learning, helps to accurately identify strengths and areas of further development.
- Strong partnerships exist with local sporting clubs and primary schools. The quality and range of resources are good overall. The changing rooms and dance studio are new additions that complement the sports hall, gymnasium, hard court area and extensive playing fields.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring that more able students are fully challenged in all lessons to increase their levels of performance
- making more effective use of ICT to further support the teaching and assessment of PE
- increasing the amount of time available for students in Key Stages 4 and 5.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop PE 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

Philip Mann
Her Majesty's Inspector