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Ms B Peploe  
Headteacher  
Fulham Cross Girl's School and Language College  
Munster Road  
London  
SW6 6BP

Dear Ms Peploe

### **Ofsted 2010–11 subject survey inspection programme: economics and business education**

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and students, during my visit on 17 and 18 January 2011 to look at work in economics and business education.

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 three lessons.

The overall effectiveness of economics and business education, including the development of students' economic and business understanding and enterprise and financial capability is outstanding.

### **Achievement in economics and business education**

Achievement in economics and business education is outstanding.

- Attainment is high. All students taking the BTEC First Certificate pass and the proportion attaining higher grades has increased consistently over the last three years. In 2010, 42% of students taking the course gained the highest possible grade, Distinction\*.
- There is no underachievement and most students and individual groups of students achieve significantly above their expected target grades.
- Students have very good attitudes to learning. They understand very well the importance of developing very good independent learning skills, are self-motivated and self-disciplined in their focus on achieving at the

highest level. They are articulate, thoughtful, well informed and have high aspirations.

- As a result of very well planned provision, all students are developing excellent employability skills and demonstrate very good levels of enterprise and financial capability. However, the development of their broad economic and business understanding is not as strong.

### **Quality of teaching in economics and business education**

The quality of teaching in economics and business education is good.

- A wide variety of learning activities is provided to stimulate and engage students and to meet their individual needs.
- In most lessons, the level of challenge is very high and teachers' questioning is excellent. As a result, students' responses demonstrate good, and often very good, knowledge and understanding and the ability to apply these to unfamiliar contexts. However, the level of challenge is not as high in all lessons and learning activities do not always stretch the most able students sufficiently.
- Precisely targeted individual support and guidance ensure that all students are able to meet very challenging targets. Students say they feel very well supported by their teachers. They receive excellent oral and written feedback on their interim assignment submissions. As a result, they understand precisely what they are required to demonstrate in their assignments to meet assessment criteria at each grade.
- Marking is detailed and links closely and accurately to assessment criteria. Effective quality assurance procedures are in place.
- Teaching on the whole-school provision for enterprise education is excellent and students are very positive about this, both in terms of personal, social, health, and economic education (PSHEE) lessons and flexible learning days. These are interactive and fast paced and result in students developing very good knowledge, understanding and skills.

### **Quality of the curriculum in economics and business education**

The quality of the curriculum in economics and business education is outstanding.

- The choice of formally assessed course meets the needs of students exceptionally well, providing them with the opportunity to achieve the highest grades possible. The skills they develop within the course, particularly in relation to independent learning, self-discipline and motivation, provide them with a very strong basis for their post-16 education, training or employment.
- Links with business on the formally assessed course have been excellent, including business mentors for each student. As a result of recent changes in the course provision, the quality and extent of students' current engagement with business is no longer as strong. Students commented on

how a greater engagement with business enhanced the quality of their learning.

- Although students have excellent opportunities to develop work-related learning and employability skills as well as enterprise and personal financial capability, the emphasis on developing economic and business understanding is not as strong.
- A broad based, cohesive whole-school enterprise education programme is in place that includes flexible learning days, dedicated PSHEE lessons and coverage of a range of issues within subjects across the curriculum. All students benefit from this provision, which includes a specially designed programme for more vulnerable students. The whole-school programme is supported very well by the local education business partnership and includes excellent engagement with local businesses and employers.

### **Effectiveness of leadership and management in economics and business education**

Leadership and management in economics and business education are outstanding.

- The subject leader has a high level of subject expertise and a thorough knowledge of course structure and assessment requirements, which is used exceptionally well to design a course that enables students to attain outstanding results.
- Self-evaluation is of a very high standard. It is critical, detailed, and includes clear and ongoing identification of strengths and weaknesses. Students' views are taken into account and inform developments.
- Ambitious targets are set for students based on very detailed monitoring and analysis of achievement data and clear systems are in place to track progress. Decisive leadership was demonstrated through the difficult decision to change course mid-way because it was not enabling students to achieve as well as had been anticipated.
- A clear and shared vision exists for whole-school enterprise education, which results in a well-integrated and coordinated programme of learning, including relevant professional development for all teachers.
- Leaders are thoughtful, reflective, enthusiastic and totally committed to continually improve provision to promote outstanding achievement through a fully inclusive provision for all students.

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

- building on the previous excellent links with business to enhance the quality of learning for all students on the formally assessed business course
- developing the focus on economic and business understanding within the whole-school provision for enterprise education so that it is of a similar high quality and coverage to other elements

- ensuring that learning activities for students on the formally assessed business course are challenging and stretching in all their lessons.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop economics and business education in the school.

As I 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. Except in the case of academies, a copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

**Gwen Coates**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**