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Mr C Hilton  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Hilton

**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 29 and 30 November 2010 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.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included: interviews with staff and students; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of students' work; and observation of seven lessons, one tutor period and one assembly.

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

**Achievement in economics and business education**

Achievement in economics and business education is good.

- Attainment in formally assessed business courses is above average and shows a clear trend of improvement over recent years. From their starting points, students make good progress.
- Students have good attitudes to learning and are able to work well independently and in groups. They demonstrate good skills in terms of reflection and creativity.

- All students' economic and business understanding and enterprise and financial capability are developing well as a result of the school's very well planned provision in this area.

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

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

- Teachers' excellent subject knowledge is used well to develop a wide variety of innovative teaching and learning activities that makes good use of information and communication technology and consistently engages students actively in learning.
- Lesson planning is excellent and differentiation is good, particularly in using data to plan the composition of groups.
- Assessment to support learning is outstanding because it is firmly embedded in lessons and, together with good teaching, is having a significant impact on improving progress and enhancing learning.
- Teachers' questioning is good in establishing or confirming understanding but it rarely extends or deepens students' thinking.
- Marking is consistently of high quality, focusing well on how students can improve their demonstration of higher level skills.

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

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

- The introduction of a new vocational course at Key Stage 4 ensures that the different learning styles and needs of students are met well. As yet there is no related course post-16, but the school is actively planning to introduce an appropriate progression route when the current Key Stage 4 students complete their course.
- There is a good focus on personalised provision, for example the opportunity to follow an NVQ in Business Administration where this meets students' needs more closely than the mainstream offer.
- There are excellent opportunities for all students to develop work-related learning and employability skills through a combination of suspended timetable days, discrete modules and lessons, tutor time and assemblies.
- Business links are strong within the whole-school provision for enterprise education but, together with enrichment activities, are more limited within the formally assessed economics and business education provision.

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management in economics and business education is outstanding.

- Leaders of economics and business education provision have a strong sense of purpose and high expectations. Within the formally assessed provision their impact can be seen in the improving quality of the curriculum and of teaching, and in the rising trend in students' achievement.
- Self-evaluation is accurate in identifying strengths and areas for development, but recognises that the views of students on formally assessed economics and business education courses are not yet contributing formally to the evaluation process.
- Students' progress and the quality of teaching and learning are monitored rigorously.
- Highly effective sharing of good practice takes place among teachers involved in economics and business education and there are good professional development opportunities.
- There is a clear vision for how whole-school provision can prepare all students for the world of work. Coordination and management of this provision is very good; learning outcomes are identified and appropriate means for assessing them are in place.

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

- ensuring that teachers use questioning not only to confirm students' understanding but also to extend and deepen their thinking and thus to further develop their higher level skills
- developing the range of enrichment activities available and the opportunities to engage with real businesses for students on formally assessed economics and business education courses.

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 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

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