

Aviation House  
125 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231  
F 020 7421 6855  
[enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



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Mrs C Lynch  
Headteacher  
Great Baddow High School  
Dufield road  
Beehive Lane  
Chelmsford  
CM2 9RZ

Dear Mrs Lynch

### **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 3 and 4 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 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 parts of eight lessons.

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.

- In Key Stage 4, attainment has been above average in recent years and in 2009 results were very high. At GCE A level, the proportion of students gaining the highest grades is above average.
- The record of students' progress in examination courses is good. In Key Stage 4, students generally reach their challenging targets. At GCE A level, value-added analysis indicates that progress has been consistently good over several years.

- Classroom observations indicate that students in examination classes are currently making good progress.
- The economic and business understanding and financial capability of students who do not take examination courses are patchy. Good enterprise opportunities through focused 'pastoral days' have led to some good learning and understanding regarding production, pricing and marketing. By contrast, students' financial capability and knowledge of the economy are less well developed.

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

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

- In examination courses, teaching is knowledgeable and confident. Relations between staff and students are very positive and students clearly enjoy learning. In the sixth form, students find that the learning styles favoured by different teachers complement each other well. In the best lessons, teaching links the subject to the real world at every opportunity, using case studies and examples that are relevant to students' experience.
- Information and communication technology is often used well by teachers to engage students through relevant video resources or links on the internet. In some lessons, there is an over-reliance on a narrow range of teaching styles and students working at computers.
- Students feel very well supported and are made aware of how to improve their work through helpful written comments and oral feedback. They report that teachers are available to help in and outside of lessons. However, during lessons, teachers do not always check that all students understand before embarking on tasks.

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

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

- Examination courses offered at GCE A level, GCSE in business studies and BTEC business are all very popular and, at Key Stage 4, meet the different needs and interests of a wide group of abilities. In the sixth form, students with the ability to take on an extra subject benefit from the enrichment of a GCE AS level course in economics.
- Visits to real businesses, such as the Year 10 trip to Cadbury World, provide some good opportunities to enliven examination courses. The school is seeking to make the examination subject more engaging and interesting through further direct contact with employers and the business world.
- Students not following examination courses in business have increasing provision in the curriculum to develop their economic and business understanding and take part in enterprise activities. The school is reviewing how to bring greater coherence to this provision.

- Currently, 'pastoral days' arranged by specialists provide some useful opportunities to develop enterprise skills. This inclusive provision is supplemented by enterprise clubs and mini-enterprise activities. Students also have opportunities to engage in business-related activities, such as the running of a school bank. Plans exist to include a 'pastoral day' on financial capability. Other curriculum subjects make useful contributions to economic understanding, such as the work of 'fair trade' in religious education. However, overall, too little work in this area of the curriculum is underpinned by clearly identified learning objectives, assessment or monitoring.
- Opportunities to discuss the current economic situation and its possible impact on students are rare. In the sixth form, GCE AS general studies tackles some areas of economic and business understanding. Sixth formers have good opportunities to learn about student finance, such as a day at a local university.

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

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

- The leadership and management of examination courses are good. A good track record exists of student achievement and there is an upward trend in performance. The joint heads of department complement one another which leads to good improvement planning. Subject leadership is constantly reviewing and seeking ways to improve students' performance. This track record provides evidence of a very strong capacity for further improvement.
- Enterprise across the school is led by one of the joint heads of business. He brings passion and vision to the role. Changes to the overall leadership of personal, social, health and economic education have resulted in a review of provision by senior leaders. Improvements are being made to ensure greater coherence and complete coverage of the programmes of study, especially in Key Stage 3.

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

- teachers observing students more systematically during lessons to assess their learning and to better support and challenge the full range of ability in the class
- identifying the learning outcomes that students are expected to gain in economics, business and enterprise education across the school and developing better systems to monitor and evaluate their progress.

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

**Adrian Lyons**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**