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Ms M King  
Headteacher  
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Dear Ms King

**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 23 and 24 March 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 seven lessons and a year-group 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.

- A higher proportion of students than the national average gains A\* to C grades in the Applied GCSE in business. This represents good progress for these students relative to their prior attainment. In the lessons observed, students demonstrated a range of attainment, but most are on track to meet highly challenging target grades.
- In the lessons observed, students used information and communication technology (ICT) well to support their learning, in particular demonstrating good research skills and use of a variety of software. Their behaviour was good and they were fully engaged in well-planned tasks and activities,

working on their own, or in pairs. Students enjoy their business lessons and value highly the support they receive from teachers.

- Students not taking business examination courses develop good economics and business understanding, and financial and enterprise capabilities. They value this part of their studies and in particular being able to work together in a concentrated block of time in 'Focus Days'.

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

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

- Teachers have an excellent rapport with their students and know well their strengths and areas for improvement. They provide students with excellent individual support in lessons, although, on occasions, this impinges on the development of students' independent learning skills.
- Where appropriate, teachers made good use of a range of resources and in particular used ICT very well to enhance learning, including film clips and other web-based resources.
- In the lessons observed, teachers planned lessons well with interesting tasks that supported what they intended students to learn. They illustrated their lessons successfully with topical, real-life examples. Planned extension tasks posed students extra challenge, and learning was enhanced through peer review.
- As the school acknowledges, teachers' use of questioning to check and extend learning is an area for improvement. Where questioning was less successful, more vocal students were allowed to dominate on occasions, and teachers made insufficient use of directed questioning. Teachers were often too ready to summarise students' responses and were too content with basic answers. As a result, teachers progressed on to the next stage of the lesson before consolidating students' understanding.
- Teachers' feedback on students' work is detailed and thorough, providing useful guidance on how to improve performance and encouragement to achieve higher grades. Their marking shows good attention to students' spelling and grammar, and the correct use of business terminology.

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

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

- The current business curriculum meets students' needs well, reflecting the range of their prior attainment. Business is a very popular choice with a much higher proportion of students studying business than is the case nationally.
- Whole-school provision for economics and business understanding, personal financial capability and enterprise is good. The school has a good overview of the provision and where this is taught in subjects. The programme of 'Focus Days' is well conceived and coherent. However, the school is not yet able to assess students' achievements in this area of work against identified learning outcomes.

- Work-experience is well organised and the school prepares students well. Leaders and managers are working to good effect to improve the school's links with businesses to enhance the provision in formally assessed business courses and in the whole-school provision.

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

Leadership and management in economics and business education are good.

- Leaders and managers of the formally assessed business provision have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement of this work and are focused clearly on raising further the levels of students' progress and attainment. The culture of continuous improvement is strong. Teachers are supported well, including having good professional development opportunities.
- Teachers' monitoring of students' progress is particularly strong, and interventions to support those at risk of underachieving are bringing about improvement in their performance.
- The vision for the whole-school provision is clear and shows the impact of well-designed actions to improve its quality. Leaders and managers have a clear understanding of how this provision may be improved further. Coordination of the work being done across subjects to develop economics and business understanding, personal financial and enterprise capabilities is strong.

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

- implementing plans to develop the assessment of students' economics and business understanding, enterprise and personal financial capabilities in the whole-school provision
- ensuring that teachers' use of questioning to check and extend learning is of a consistently high standard in 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

**Russell Jordan**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**