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11 November 2011

Ms J Byrne
Headteacher
Bishop Ullathorne Catholic School
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Dear Ms Byrne

Ofsted 2011–12 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 1 and 2 November 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 eight lessons.

The overall effectiveness of economics and business education is outstanding.

Achievement in economics and business education

Achievement in economics and business education is good.

- Students' attainment at Key Stage 4 shows an improving trend over the past three years. The proportion of students achieving A* to C grades was well above the national average in each of the past two years, and these students made good progress.
- In the sixth form, students' attainment is well above the national average. Their progress is good in GCE A level business but shows an inconsistent trend at GCE AS level.
- Students not taking formally assessed economics and business courses are developing very strong economics and business understanding, enterprise skills, and personal financial capability. They talk about what they have

learnt confidently and with considerable reflection, often providing excellent examples of how they have applied their learning in other parts of their studies.

Quality of teaching in economics and business education

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

- Teachers have a good rapport with their students. Their economics, business, and enterprise subject knowledge was good across the range of lessons and subjects observed.
- In the lessons observed, teachers planned a range of highly engaging tasks that focused well on what students should learn. Lessons provided good opportunities for students to develop and practise higher-order thinking skills, such as analysis and evaluation, and enterprise skills, including team-working and creativity.
- In the lessons observed, teachers' use of questioning to check and extend students' learning, and to challenge and develop their thinking was a strong feature.
- Where appropriate, teachers made good use of information and communication technology to enhance learning.

Quality of the curriculum in economics and business education

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

- Business is a highly popular choice of subject. The proportion of students choosing business at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form is well above the national average. Students talk very enthusiastically about how their experiences lower down the school in economics and business understanding, and enterprise capability were instrumental in influencing them to study business at Key Stage 4.
- Leaders and managers make outstanding provision throughout the school for economics and business understanding, enterprise and personal financial capability. The provision is structured and coordinated exceptionally well into a broad, diverse and coherent programme with citizenship and personal, social and health education at the core. In subjects, teachers plan exceptionally well to develop enterprise skills and to enable students to understand economics and business in an ethical framework. This provision meets students' needs and interests very successfully.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in economics and business education

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

- Leaders and managers have been highly successful in improving students' attainment and progress in business courses. Their meticulous monitoring of students' progress and analysis of performance data provide a clear and well-conceived agenda for further improvements.
- The whole-school vision for developing students for the world of work is exceptionally clear and is integral to the school's ethos for its students of aspiration, attainment, moral purpose and values. Provision for economics and business understanding, financial and enterprise capability has a very high profile in the life of the school. The coordination and management of this work is excellent.
- Leaders and managers have a very good understanding of strengths and areas for improvement in the provision; they are highly successful in promoting a culture of continuous improvement with students' achievements at the centre of their work.
- Arrangements to assess and report on students' achievement in economics and business understanding, enterprise and personal financial capability are sound.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring that the progress made by students taking GCE AS level business matches more consistently the good progress made by their peers at A level.

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

Russell Jordan
Her Majesty's Inspector