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Dear Rabbi Meyer

Ofsted 2011–12 subject survey inspection programme: economics, business and enterprise

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and students, during my visit on 24 and 25 January 2012 to look at work in economics, business and enterprise.

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.

The overall effectiveness of economics, business and enterprise is outstanding.

Achievement in economics, business and enterprise

Achievement in economics, business and enterprise is outstanding.

- Attainment overall is high. This reflects students' above average attainment on entry and the good, and for many students, outstanding progress they make in economics and business courses.
- Students have excellent attitudes to learning. They take full responsibility for their own learning, are reflective, use their initiative and have excellent collaborative learning skills. They show a real interest in the subject, articulate sophisticated responses to teachers' questioning and ask challenging questions to clarify their own understanding.

- All students, including those not taking formally assessed economics and business courses, are developing excellent enterprise-related skills, although the development of basic economic understanding and financial capability among girls is relatively less strong compared with boys.

Quality of teaching in economics, business and enterprise

The quality of teaching in economics, business and enterprise is outstanding.

- Lesson observations and the school's monitoring records indicate that teaching is consistently good and much is outstanding.
- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge. This earns them the respect of students and enables students to have every confidence that their teachers will challenge them to reach their potential.
- Teachers communicate the highest expectations at all times in relation to behaviour, standards of work and collaborative skills.
- Teachers use a wide range of interesting teaching strategies that thoroughly engages and challenges all students and includes well-focused and effective differentiation to ensure that the needs of all students are met.
- Teachers regularly link their discussion of theory in the classroom to current real economic and business scenarios to ensure students appreciate the application of their learning to real-world contexts.
- Teachers ensure that students are fully aware of assessment objectives and the skills they must demonstrate to meet their target grades.
- Teachers' questioning is used consistently – not only to confirm students' understanding, but also to extend and deepen it. Marking of written assignments is accurate and provides helpful feedback indicating how students might improve on their work and meet their targets. Students find this useful, although it is not always disseminated at class level so that students can learn from the strengths and weaknesses demonstrated in each other's work.

Quality of the curriculum in economics, business and enterprise

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

- A broad and well-balanced curriculum of economics, business studies and applied business ensures that provision meets the needs of all students, including those who are highly academic and those for whom a more vocationally practical approach is relevant.
- There is a rich and inspiring range of enrichment activities related to enterprise education available for all students. In addition, the Jewish studies element of the curriculum contributes significantly to this, particularly in its focus on business-related ethics. This latter contributes significantly to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

- Good business links enhance the whole-school provision for enterprise education, but these are not as strong for the formally assessed provision.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in economics, business and enterprise

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

- The subject area has a very high profile in the school and leaders have a clear vision for its development.
- Rigorous quality assurance procedures ensure that the quality of teaching and students' performance are of the highest standards and that underperformance is identified and tackled promptly and effectively.
- Self-evaluation is accurate, perceptive and focused on improving provision and performance further. This is illustrated in the mentoring of good teachers by outstanding teachers and the planned curriculum changes to more closely match students' needs.
- The whole-school provision to develop knowledge and understanding in relation to enterprise education makes a very important contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The coordination and management of this provision is excellent and the school is able to evaluate its quality and its impact on student outcomes.
- Very good sharing of good practice in relation to economics and business studies is in place. However, although many opportunities for generic professional development and improvement in relation to subject assessment exist, there are fewer opportunities for teachers to pursue subject specific pedagogical enhancement.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- developing business links in order to support and enhance further the provision for formally assessed economics and business courses.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop economics, business and enterprise 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.

Yours sincerely

Gwen Coates
Her Majesty's Inspector