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Mr N Coles  
Principal  
Priory Community School  
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Dear Mr Coles

**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 30 and 31 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, students and governors; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of students' work; and observation of five lessons as well as a range of other enterprise activities.

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

**Achievement in economics, business and enterprise**

Achievement in economics, business and enterprise is good.

- Formally assessed provision in business studies has been reintroduced this academic year. Students following the BTEC vocational business course are making good progress in the development of their understanding of business organisation and structures. Higher and middle attainers are developing effective skills in applying their theoretical understanding to the real business case studies they have researched.
- Across the academy, students develop excellent employability skills, especially those of teamworking and leadership. Students across all years have a strong understanding of how to be enterprising, and are widely involved in innovative schemes to generate income for charities and social

enterprises. This contributes well to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Many are confident in critically evaluating their own work and that of others. Older students are exceptionally well informed about opportunities and pathways into further education and careers.

- Students' economic understanding is less well developed than their enterprise skills. They lack confidence in discussing general conditions affecting the economy, although those who have studied aspects of economics, for example hyper-inflation in Germany in the 1920s in GCSE history, have a good grasp. Older students have a sound basic understanding of aspects of personal finance although they lack breadth in their understanding of factors involved in making financial decisions.

### **Quality of teaching in economics, business and enterprise**

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

- Lessons are consistently well planned to meet the whole-school aim of developing students' 'personal thinking skills'. As a consequence, lessons frequently have a business or enterprise component as they encourage students to work independently or collaboratively in solving problems.
- Teachers have very high expectations for their students' learning and progress. Students are consistently challenged to work at high levels and push beyond their challenging targets, including in the business course in Year 10. Marking and feedback to students on how to improve their work are of a high quality throughout.
- Teachers make creative use of information and communication technology to capture students' interest, impart knowledge, and to facilitate students' independent learning. For example, the widely available 'tablet' computers enable students to access teaching and learning programmes and up-to-date information. This enables students' learning frequently to be set in real-world contexts. Students in GCSE geography, for example, were observed investigating the economic implications of coastal erosion for their town, drawing on up-to-date information on budgets and costs.

### **Quality of the curriculum in economics, business and enterprise**

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

- Opportunities for students to develop their business ideas and enterprise skills permeate the whole curriculum and the extensive range of activities in the after-school 'Period 6' programme. Exceptionally good links with a range of local employers support the academy's high-quality careers seminar programme and a range of work-experience opportunities.
- Direct links with local business organisations have, however, yet to be established to promote the vocational element of the business course offered in Year 10.
- While students have some opportunities to develop their economic understanding and financial capability, including through special 'collapsed

timetable' days, the curriculum does not offer clear strands for the progressive development of students' knowledge and skills in these areas.

### **Effectiveness of leadership and management in economics, business and enterprise**

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

- Leaders have established an outstanding enterprise culture across the academy, which manifests itself in many forms: from the growing range of traded services which the academy sells to many local schools, to the consultant support it facilitates for entrepreneurial students in Year 7 to develop their real business ideas.
- Teachers have been well supported in reintroducing formally assessed business provision to the academy and in receiving training to deliver an unfamiliar vocational model. Planning of the course so far has been effective in promoting students' good progress. Less clear is the longer-term vision for the development of the subject.
- Systems to track students' progression in developing their economics, business, enterprise and financial capabilities are underdeveloped.

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

- strengthening students' economic understanding and building on their financial skills by developing a curriculum which ensures progressive development of these capabilities
- planning more explicitly for the long-term development of the formally assessed business provision, including for a greater direct involvement of business organisations
- establishing a coherent system for tracking the development, at whole-school level, of students' economics, business, enterprise and financial capabilities.

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

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

**Ian Hodgkinson**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**