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Mrs P K Conibeer
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Dear Mrs Conibeer

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 29 February and 1 March 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 four lessons.

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

Achievement in economics, business and enterprise

Achievement in economics, business and enterprise is good.

- Students' performance in business courses at Key Stage 4 is good and improving. Over the past three years, the proportion of students meeting or exceeding challenging target grades is increasing, representing good and better progress for these students, given their starting points.
- In the sixth form, students' achievement is inconsistent. In the applied A-level single award in business, students made broadly average progress last year given their starting points. In the lessons observed, current students' attainment was frequently above average. The school rightly recognises that raising achievement in the sixth form is a key area for improvement.

- Students not taking business courses are developing good understanding and skills in relation to enterprise education, including good employability skills, as a result of a rich and very well-planned curriculum.

Quality of teaching in economics, business and enterprise

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

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and a good rapport with their students. Their well-planned lessons include a wide range of relevant tasks and activities that successfully engage students' interest and involvement. Students' behaviour in the lessons observed was good.
- Teachers pay good attention to ensuring that students acquire and use appropriate business terminology. They make good use of real-life examples, including students' work experience, to enhance students' learning.
- In the lessons observed, teachers' questioning to check and extend students' learning was not of a consistently high standard.
- Teachers' marking of students' work is detailed and thorough, providing useful and constructive feedback on how to improve their performance. The quality of marking and feedback contribute significantly to the effectiveness of robust systems to monitor precisely students' progress.

Quality of the curriculum in economics, business and enterprise

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

- The curriculum of formal business courses has evolved well to meet the needs of students. It continues to do so by providing vocational and academic options in Key Stage 4, where business is a popular subject choice.
- 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 rich, diverse and coherent programme with citizenship and personal, social and health education at the core. Well-managed work experience and students' additional responsibilities as prefects and sports captains make an excellent contribution to developing students' enterprise and employability skills.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in economics, business and enterprise

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

- Leaders and managers have been highly successful in improving students' attainment and progress in business courses at Key Stage 4. Their meticulous tracking of students' progress and analysis of performance data

in both Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form provide a clear and well-conceived agenda for further improvements.

- The whole-school vision for developing students' enterprise-related skills and understanding and preparing them for the world of work is very clear. It contributes well to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This provision has a high profile in the school. Its coordination and management are strong. Arrangements to assess and report on students' achievements are well conceived.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- raising achievement in business courses in the sixth form to match the levels seen in the rest of the provision
- ensuring that teachers' use of questioning to check and extend all students' learning is of a consistently high standard.

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

Russell Jordan
Her Majesty's Inspector