

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



20 March 2012

Mrs Hyde
Headteacher
Watford Grammar School for Girls
Lady's Close
Watford
Hertfordshire
WD18 0AE

Dear Mrs Hyde

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 the visit with my colleague Gwen Coates HMI on 13 and 14 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; observation of five lessons and attendance at an after-school meeting of a Young Enterprise company.

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

Achievement in economics, business and enterprise

Achievement in economics, business and enterprise is good.

- Attainment on GCE courses in economics and business studies is high and students make good progress. A substantial number of students go on to take economics and business courses at university.
- Students taking economics and business studies have excellent attitudes to learning and work very well in groups and independently. When given the opportunity, they are keen to contribute their ideas and raise issues. Their enthusiasm for their subjects is reflected in their high level of involvement in enrichment activities that take place outside of lessons.

- Students across the school are developing good enterprise skills, economic and business understanding and personal financial capability. This aspect of whole-school provision makes an important contribution to the development of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.

Quality of teaching in economics, business and enterprise

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

- Teachers have good and, in some cases, excellent subject knowledge and expertise. They demonstrate great enthusiasm for their subjects and have high expectations of students. Lessons are characterised by excellent relationships. Students feel very well supported and find their teachers accessible and very willing to help, for example, through the provision of additional lessons and revision classes.
- Teachers constantly refer to examination assessment criteria in lessons; marking of written work is accurate and students receive high-quality feedback on what they need to do to improve further. However, in lessons, teachers do not always check that students have fully understood the concepts and ideas being taught. Oral questioning is inclusive but in some lessons tends to focus too much on eliciting factual responses, rather than encouraging higher-order thinking.
- Teachers make very effective use of real and up-to-date examples to make lessons relevant and interesting.

Quality of the curriculum in economics, business and enterprise

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

- The current provision of GCE courses meets the needs of sixth form students and is enriched by an excellent range of voluntary activities, including competitions, visits and conferences. Sixth form students organise and run 'master classes' in economics and business for gifted and talented students in Year 8 and the department provides taster sessions for Key Stage 4 students to help them decide on their post-16 options.
- An extensive range of opportunities is offered for students to develop their enterprise skills and understanding throughout the school. A large number of Year 12 students are involved in running Young Enterprise companies and the 'in the future' course provides excellent opportunities to develop their skills for employment. However, the whole-school provision is not currently brought together as a coherent and progressive curriculum to develop enterprise skills, economic and business understanding and personal financial capability.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in economics, business and enterprise

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

- The effective leadership and management of formally assessed courses is reflected in the good take-up of economics and business studies and the sustained track record of success in examinations. Self-evaluation is accurate and informed by good-quality data, lesson observations and the views of students. Students' progress is rigorously tracked and effective intervention strategies are in place when underachievement is identified.
- The provision for whole-school enterprise education is well managed but the specific learning outcomes for individual students are not assessed and the overall impact of the provision is not evaluated.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring that teachers check the understanding of all students in lessons in order to inform teaching
- developing teacher questioning to encourage higher-order thinking and more extended oral responses from students
- bringing together the various elements of the provision for enterprise education to form a coherent and progressive curriculum and assessing the outcomes for students in order to evaluate its overall impact.

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

David Butler
Additional Inspector