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Dear Mr Prytherch

Ofsted 2012–13 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 28 and 29 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 and an assembly.

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

Achievement in economics, business and enterprise

Achievement in economics, business and enterprise is good.

- In BTEC courses, attainment is above average. In GCE A level economics and business, all students pass but below-average numbers attain the highest grades. Given their starting points, students make good progress.
- Part of the reason for the good progress students make is their commitment to the subject which is shown by the highly positive attitudes and behaviour in lessons and their willingness to seek additional support out of lessons. Students are skilled in working independently.
- Students' business and economic awareness is developing well as a result of the school's well-planned provision and the fact that the majority of students have part-time employment and most have bank accounts. The

proportion of students who leave Year 11 without proceeding to employment, education or training is very low.

Quality of teaching in economics, business and enterprise

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

- Teaching on formally assessed courses is good. On the GCE A level course a range of teaching and learning styles and activities is used effectively. A good focus is placed on examination requirements. The subject is related to the real world through examples from the business experience of teachers.
- The school is highly proficient at enabling students to meet BTEC requirements. A narrow range of teaching and learning strategies has proved effective at enabling BTEC students to work independently with teacher support and coaching, resulting in students meeting the course requirements.
- On both courses, few opportunities exist for extending and deepening knowledge and understanding, or encouraging students to articulate complex ideas.
- Excellent relationships are formed between teachers and students. Students are very well supported and acknowledge, as a real strength, the personalised help they are given by staff to achieve and often exceed their target grades.
- The economics and business elements of personal, social, health and economics are delivered by form tutors whose teaching is well supported with good-quality resources. This work is quality assured through the school's performance management processes.

Quality of the curriculum in economics, business and enterprise

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

- At Key Stage 4, just one formally assessed course is in place which is the BTEC in work skills. Good, well-planned coverage of enterprise topics, especially personal finance, exists through the tutorial programme. This is enhanced by various enterprising opportunities to raise money for charity and a wide range of visitors who raise students' aspirations of the world of work.
- In the sixth form, an excellent range of provision meets the needs and interests of different groups of students including GCE A level economics and business and BTEC courses in business at different levels.
- Few opportunities are available within the formally assessed economics and business studies courses for students to engage with the 'real' world through direct contact with employers.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in economics, business and enterprise

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

- The management of the BTEC courses receive very favourable external verification.
- In formally assessed courses, the improving achievement in the sixth form and current assessment information provide strong evidence of the capacity to improve further. Some opportunities to enhance the quality of provision may be missed as leadership arrangements lack clarity, and the small size of the subject team could potentially lead to isolation.
- The school has surveyed the economic understanding of its students. It has a good understanding of their needs in this area. A clear vision and rationale for enterprise education leads to well-planned provision that contributes to the development of aspects of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring that teacher questioning is used not only to check and confirm understanding but also to extend and deepen students' thinking and their ability to articulate complex ideas
- extending the opportunities for students on formally assessed courses to engage with real businesses
- supporting the relatively small subject team through developing links with networks of teachers of economics, business and enterprise.

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. A copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

Adrian Lyons
Her Majesty's Inspector