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Mrs K Grimes  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Grimes

### **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 10 and 11 May 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; an analysis of students' work; and an observation of a student presentation.

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

### **Achievement in economics, business and enterprise**

Achievement in economics, business and enterprise is good.

- Because the school does not currently teach any externally assessed examination courses in economics and business, the visit focused on the provision of enterprise education for all students.
- Students are developing excellent enterprise and employability skills which are fostered through a strong programme of work-related learning. This makes an important contribution to their personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education. Students were able to refer to ways in which they had worked together effectively in teams to find solutions to 'real-life' problems and to run events. These skills were demonstrated through the excellent presentation given by A-level physics students on an engineering project, working in conjunction with a local company and Cambridge

University, to research, design and produce a new type of electrically powered lawnmower.

- Students are developing a good understanding of managing money appropriate to their age. For example, younger students are aware of the differences between credit and debit cards and older students have a good understanding of the costs of independent living. Students generally have a sound grasp of basic economic ideas, for example about why prices might vary, but their understanding of issues to do with the whole economy, such as inflation and unemployment, is less well developed.

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

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

- Circumstances meant that it was not possible to observe any pertinent lessons and the following findings are based on discussions with students, evidence from students' written work and the school's own evaluations of teaching in PSHE education.
- A major strength in teaching is the use made of 'real world' examples, including some excellent links with local businesses and employers. This helps to make lessons relevant and interesting. Good use is made of visiting speakers, for example in geography a local farmer talked about the current economic issues he was facing and students discussed possible solutions in terms of land use. In mathematics, students have opportunities to apply their skills in real contexts, including visiting Newmarket racecourse and taking part in a residential experience.
- Students' written work provided many examples, across a wide range of subjects, of teachers using economic and business contexts wherever appropriate to enhance learning and develop understanding. However, economic and business concepts were not always made explicit and this was reflected in discussion with students. The school's own evaluations of teaching in PSHE education indicate it to be generally good but it also identified lessons that are no more than satisfactory. In discussions, higher-attaining students did not always feel they were sufficiently challenged by the work in this subject.

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

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

- The school does not currently teach examination courses in economics and business but a small number of students take business studies at a partner school and good liaison takes place between the schools to monitor their progress.
- All students undertake work experience in Year 10 and students have further opportunities for more specialised work experience in the sixth form. A programme of careers education and guidance, personal finance education and economic awareness is taught through the timetabled PSHE education course in Years 9 to 11 and through the sixth form general

studies and enrichment programmes. A significant number of Year 11 students have business mentors. A strong programme of vocational education and applied learning throughout the school includes aspects of business and enterprise education. Additional opportunities for all students to develop enterprise skills are provided through activity days. A very substantial proportion of students take part in the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme and many are involved in the sports leaders' programme.

- A coherent programme of study is in place within PSHE education; however no overall scheme of work for economic, business and enterprise education exists across the school to identify the key learning objectives at different stages of students' development. The provision to develop students' understanding of how the economy operates is less secure than other aspects of the provision.

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

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

- Economic, business and enterprise education is seen as important by you and your colleagues and this is reflected in the good curriculum provision. Individual aspects of the provision are well managed but no overall coordination takes place to ensure coherence and progression. Similarly, individual components of students' progress are assessed but no overall evaluation is provided of the impact of the provision and assessment of students' knowledge and skills.

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

- developing the overall coordination of the provision to ensure better coherence and progression in students' learning
- enhancing the provision to develop students' understanding of how the economy operates
- putting in place systems to evaluate the overall provision for economic, business and enterprise education and to monitor students' progress.

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

**David Butler**  
**Additional Inspector**