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Mr W Jennings
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Dear Mr Jennings

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 15 and 16 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; analysis of students' work; and observation of eight 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.

- In recent years, attainment on formally assessed business courses has been above average. There was a dip at GCSE in 2011, but current school data suggest that attainment in 2012 is likely to be above average again. Students make good progress in their learning and most achieve or exceed their targets.
- As a result of excellent planned provision, all students are developing a good understanding of personal financial issues and of basic economics and business issues. Their enterprise skills are developing very well.

Quality of teaching in economics, business and enterprise

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

- All teachers are subject specialists with excellent subject knowledge. They make constant reference to actual business issues and events. They are particularly good at starting from students' own understanding and awareness of business issues and building on this. They use a very good range of teaching and learning strategies that engages students and requires them to take an active part in learning both independently and in groups. As a result the quality of teaching in some lessons is outstanding.
- Accommodation and resources are of a very high standard and contribute significantly to a very positive learning environment. This is enhanced by the excellent relationship between teachers and students.
- Teachers adapt their teaching to meet the needs and interests of students of all abilities. They have high expectations of students - of their behaviour in lessons and of the quality of the work they produce. Students respond well to this by behaving well and having very good attitudes to learning.
- A very good focus on assessment criteria ensures that all students know their target grades and the extent to which they are meeting these. Marking is accurate. Written feedback is generally good but is not yet consistently and sufficiently diagnostic in informing students precisely of what they need to do to improve further. Regular assessment takes place to check students' understanding and their progress. Questioning is used well to gauge or check understanding. It is not always used as well to extend and deepen students' thinking and to encourage their higher order oral responses and sometimes insufficient thinking time is provided.

Quality of the curriculum in economics, business and enterprise

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

- The formally assessed curriculum meets the needs of all students and ensures appropriate progression routes from Key Stage 4 to Key Stage 5.
- Excellent links with businesses and employers are in place. These include business visits and visiting speakers. These links enhance the formally assessed business courses and whole-school enterprise provision, enrich students' experiences and contribute well to their learning about business.
- Whole-school enterprise education provision is excellent. It is exceptionally well planned and provides numerous opportunities for students to engage with businesses and experience enterprise activities. Excellent initiatives include the Smoothie Bar and Women in Enterprise. As well as these, and similar enterprise initiatives, students in Year 9 can opt for an excellent business enterprise module in the technology option block, and all students study a very well-planned discrete module in the personal, social, health, citizenship and economics education programme. This whole-school provision is exemplary in the way it has been planned and executed to develop a range of important employment skills and an understanding

of the business world for all students. It contributes exceptionally well to the development of aspects of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in economics, business and enterprise

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

- Departmental leadership ensures consistency in the quality of provision across the department. Very good systems are in place to monitor students' progress and teachers' performance in the department. The planning of schemes of work and the sharing of resources indicate a very strong and cohesive subject team who share best practice and learn from each other. The impact of good-quality leadership and management is evident in the very good reputation the subject has in the school. Self-evaluation is accurate but is not yet sharp enough to focus on what needs to improve to move from good to outstanding.
- A clear vision is in place at whole-school level for enterprise education and for preparing students for the world of work. This is reflected in the excellent and coherent programme that is planned and led by the head of department and other members of the subject team. Systems are in place to evaluate this provision and to assess the impact on students' outcomes.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- improving questioning to stretch and challenge students more effectively by extending and deepening their understanding and thinking skills and developing their ability to articulate higher-order responses
- ensuring that marking is more consistently diagnostic so that students are very clear about the next steps for improvement
- sharpening departmental self-evaluation so that it focuses more clearly on improvement from good to outstanding.

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

Gwen Coates
Her Majesty's Inspector