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Ms Wendy White
Headteacher
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Dear Ms White

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Business education

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 27 November 2006 to look at work in business education.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the subject, the visit had a particular focus on economic and business understanding and financial capability for all pupils.

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. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included: interviews with staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of three lessons.

The overall effectiveness of business education was judged to be satisfactory.

Achievement and standards

Overall pupils make satisfactory progress in GCSE business studies and leisure and tourism.

- Standards on GCSE business studies and leisure and tourism are good. The proportion of pupils gaining grades A*-C has improved slightly in the last two years and is above the national average.
- The school's analysis of pupils' performance in 2006, based on what can be expected from their results in the Key Stage 3 tests, indicates that in

GCSE business studies most achieve their predicted grades and in leisure and tourism most achieve a grade above what was expected.

- Boys did not achieve as well as the girls in both GCSE subjects.
- Pupils show good attitudes to learning and are well motivated. Pupils were not always able to use business vocabulary effectively in class discussions and the revision lessons observed revealed some misunderstanding of basic concepts.
- The standard of pupils' coursework is good.

Quality of teaching and learning of business education

The quality of teaching and learning in business education is satisfactory.

- Lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives. Well structured worksheets support learning but there are insufficient opportunities for higher attaining pupils to develop their responses.
- An increasing range of teaching and learning methods is being developed, but teachers tend to spend too much time talking, leaving insufficient time for pupils to be involved in activities.
- The use of information technology to support learning is underdeveloped.
- Assessment of coursework is thorough and supports pupils in achieving high grades.
- Recent improvements in preparing pupils for external examinations has resulted in improved results. Pupils are not always clear about how well they are doing during the course and there is insufficient emphasis on developing their skills of application and analysis.

Quality of curriculum

The curriculum in business education is satisfactory. The proportion of pupils taking GCSE business studies or leisure and tourism has declined and is now low.

- Links with local businesses help to enhance the delivery of GCSE leisure and tourism but they are underdeveloped in business studies.
- The school has recently introduced an eight week enterprise module in the technology carousel for all pupils in Key Stage 3 as a way of increasing interest and a better take-up of business courses in Key Stage 4. Pupils enjoy working in groups on a practical enterprise project, for example devising a calendar, board game or chocolate bar.
- In Key Stage 4 a range of additional activities including work experience, aspects of citizenship and a complementary programme of study has been developed to cover the national requirements for economic and business understanding, but it is too soon to judge the impact of these.

Leadership and management of business education

Leadership and management of business education are satisfactory.

- The teacher responsible for managing and teaching business courses is well supported by senior managers. Good practice in teaching and learning is shared through discussions with other teachers in the humanities department and through contact with a business studies teacher in another school.
- Weaknesses in the provision have been identified but the strategies to address these are not always clear.
- The school has rightly identified the development of enterprise education as an important priority and has reflected this by making it the responsibility of an assistant headteacher. However, the school has not yet introduced an overarching policy on economic and business understanding, including financial capability or considered in detail how pupils' skills will be developed and assessed as they move through the school.

Inclusion

- In the Key Stage 4 option system GCSE business studies is available to all pupils, but applied GCSE leisure and tourism is only available to pupils in the lower band group.
- In lessons teaching does not always respond to the broad range of pupils' abilities and meet their individual needs.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- ensure the range of teaching and learning methods meets the needs of individual pupils
- develop the use of information technology, including the electronic whiteboard, to support pupils' learning, particularly in classroom based activities
- set GCSE business studies pupils regular written work that can be assessed by the teacher to ensure that pupils are aware of the standards they are achieving and what they need to do to improve
- develop a more coherent whole school provision for enterprise education that identifies clear learning outcomes and ways in which pupils' progress will be assessed.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop business education in the school.

As I explained in my previous letter, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be published on Ofsted's website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Bev Barlow
Her Majesty's Inspector