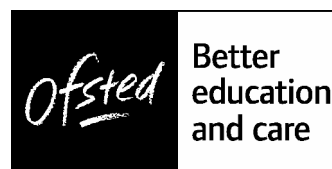


Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404045  
F 020 7421 6855  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



9 March 2007

Mr Jeremy Whelan  
Headteacher  
Fearnhill School  
Icknield Way West  
Letchworth  
Hertfordshire  
SG6 4BA

Dear Mr Whelan

Ofsted survey on personal finance education (PFE)

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 5-6 March to look at work in PFE.

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 students, scrutiny of relevant documentation and observation of four lessons.

The overall effectiveness of PFE was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

- Standards in PFE are good and most students make good progress by the end of Year 11.
- Students are confident in explaining PFE concepts and vocabulary.
- Students develop a good understanding of budgeting and are able to make informed decisions about value for money by the end of Year 11.
- Students' ability to apply numerical skills to PFE contexts is sound.
- When making financial decisions, some Year 7 students find difficulty in prioritising; however, by Year 11, most students clearly understand the need to prioritise and possess good skills in identifying these.
- At Key Stage 4, students develop a good understanding of the interest rates paid when saving or borrowing money.

- Older students understand the importance of financial planning; sixth formers are well prepared for managing the financial issues they face when progressing to higher education and living independently.

#### Quality of teaching and learning in PFE

- Teaching and learning in PFE are good.
- Adults other than teachers make a useful contribution to the teaching of PFE topics within the personal, social, health and careers education (PSHCE) programme.

#### Quality of curriculum

- Provision for PFE is good; the combination of regular timetabled sessions with additional suspended timetable days works well.
- The curriculum effectively covers key elements of PFE, such as financial planning, budgeting, interest rates, methods of paying for goods and value for money; good use is made of relevant contexts to promote consumer awareness.
- Many aspects of PFE are covered in PSHCE and mathematics; other subjects, including French, history, design technology and business education, also make a useful contribution.
- In mathematics, PFE plays a useful role in increasing the subject's relevance to students.
- Recent developments in Year 7 are intended to give students an earlier insight into budgeting, methods of paying for goods and the role of banking.
- Good links are made between PFE and healthy eating.

#### Leadership and management of PFE

- Leadership and management of PFE are satisfactory.
- There is a partial vision for PFE; the school is committed to developing young people as discerning consumers and arrangements to ensure students gain a wide range of experiences in PFE are good.
- Subjects in which PFE occurs are well managed; however, the management of PFE is piecemeal and no-one has overall responsibility for the area.
- The learning outcomes students are expected to achieve in PFE as they move through the school have not been identified and the provision for PFE across the curriculum has not been mapped.
- Training of staff teaching PFE is limited; however, guidance given to PSHCE tutors is good.
- Recording the outcomes which students achieve through PFE is underdeveloped.

## Inclusion

- Inclusion is good.
- All students have access to PFE through mathematics and PSHCE.
- Students at risk in Key Stage 4 are given additional support through the Youth Award programme, which includes a unit on personal finance; they are also supported by mentors.
- The extensive charity work at the school ensures that students have good additional opportunities to practise financial decision-making and management.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included the need to:

- identify a senior member of staff to lead on and co-ordinate PFE across the curriculum
- develop a more coherent programme for PFE, including mapping where PFE concepts are to be covered across the curriculum and identifying the learning outcomes students are expected to achieve
- develop a more rigorous system for assessing and recording the knowledge, skills and understanding students acquire through PFE.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop PFE 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

Vic Chivers  
Her Majesty's Inspector