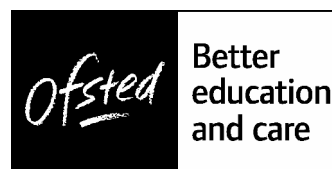


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Mr David Blow
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Dear Mr Blow

Ofsted survey on personal finance education (PFE)

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 27 and 28 February 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 three lessons.

The overall effectiveness of PFE is good.

Achievement and standards

- Standards in PFE at Key Stages 3 and 4 and in the sixth form are satisfactory and the progress made by many students as they move through the school is good.
- By the end of Year 10, most students can master calculations involving percentages and can apply these effectively in PFE contexts.
- In Years 9 and 10, students use information and communication technology effectively to create financial spreadsheets and records; in mathematics, higher attaining students show good skills in analysing and interpreting comparative financial data.
- In Years 10 and 11, students learn important skills around budgeting and prioritising personal spending.

- Sixth formers progressing to higher education have a good knowledge of the personal finance issues they will face.

Quality of teaching and learning

- The teaching of PFE is good; lessons are well planned and have good pace; teachers' willingness to share their personal experiences contributes positively to students' learning.
- The use of specialist teachers is very effective in ensuring that PFE aspects are covered with authority.
- There is a strong focus on developing students' understanding of key terms and technical vocabulary.
- The contribution of local employers to the Year 10 International Business Week and the 'Day in the Life Of...' initiative improves students understanding of the importance of personal financial planning.

Quality of curriculum

- Provision for PFE at all key stages is good.
- The school gives high priority to promoting students' personal development and well-being and PFE makes an important contribution to this; students talk positively about PFE and recognise its importance in preparing them for life beyond school.
- Mathematics, personal and social education, citizenship and business education all contribute positively to PFE.
- PFE elements are identifiable in the relevant schemes of work; however, the specific skills, attitudes and attributes which students are expected to develop in achieving personal finance capability, as they move through the school, are not made sufficiently explicit.
- The current curriculum does not cover all the elements needed to fully develop students' personal finance capability; however, teachers ensure that gaps in coverage are minimised.
- At Key Stage 3, a good start is made in educating students as consumers and good links are made between PFE and healthy living.
- The citizenship programme is effective in highlighting how public services are funded and how this can affect personal financial decisions.
- In mathematics, PFE concepts are used effectively to stimulate students' interest and motivation.
- The international business week, the school council and the wide range of charity activities all provide good opportunities for students to practise financial planning and budgeting.
- Good use is made of tutor periods to broaden the knowledge and understanding of sixth formers seeking higher education.

Leadership and management

- Leadership and management of PFE are good; the clear vision for PFE is founded on its integral role in all students' development.

- A member of the senior leadership team has overall and specific responsibility for PFE across the curriculum and this helps to ensure good communication across the teams delivering the various aspects of the programme.
- Good progress has been made in auditing PFE across the curriculum.
- Staff development is well targeted, timely and well informed by both school and departmental planning.
- Good attention is paid to reviewing learning, in particular through gathering students' opinions. The system for recording students' progress recognises the skills acquired but does not track their developing capability over time. The system is currently under review, providing an opportunity to address this issue.

Inclusion

- Inclusion is good; all students have access to PFE through mathematics, PSE and citizenship.
- The school deliberately seeks to ensure that disaffected and low achieving students benefit from PFE.
- International business week is particularly effective in promoting inclusion and the achievement of vulnerable students.

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

- clarify the specific skills, attitudes and attributes students are expected to develop in personal finance capability as they progress through the school
- review the PFE curriculum in Years 7-13 to identify gaps in current provision and links with other themes
- improve mechanisms to track and record students' progress in personal finance capability.

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