

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404040
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



25 May 2007

Mr A Fleet
Headteacher
Nova Hreod School
Akers Way
Swindon
Wiltshire
SN2 2NQ

Dear Mr Fleet

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Business education

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 22-23 May to look at work in business education. I would particularly like to thank members of the Student Council for their help during the visit.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as inspecting examination courses, the visit looked at the provision of enterprise education for all students.

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. 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, analysis of students' work and observation of parts of six lessons.

The overall effectiveness of business and enterprise education was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

Students' achievement in GCSE applied business is good.

- Examination results are well above national averages and those of other subjects in the school.

- Students make good progress and achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. Girls achieve better than boys.
- Coursework is generally thorough but often lacks analysis and evaluation.

Quality of teaching and learning of business education

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

- Teachers have good subject knowledge, lessons are well planned and involve an appropriate range of activities.
- Good use is made of the excellent information technology facilities to enhance teaching and learning.
- Students feel well supported and are made aware of how to improve their work through helpful written comments and oral feedback.
- Teaching does not always take sufficient account of the varied needs and abilities of different learners.
- Students have too few opportunities to engage directly with employers or take part in business games and simulations.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum in business education is satisfactory.

- The GCSE applied business course is open to all students and taken by approximately one third of students. No other examination courses are provided in business.
- The business course benefits from excellent accommodation and resources.
- There is a well organised programme of work experience for all students in Year 10 and a successful work-based curriculum for a small number of students in Years 10-11.
- There are good opportunities in the curriculum for students to develop their enterprise capability but this does not yet add up to a coherent programme of enterprise education with clearly defined learning outcomes for all students.

Leadership and management of business education

The leadership and management of business and enterprise education are good.

- The business course is well organised and supported by good quality programmes of study.
- There is an accurate departmental self-evaluation which identifies appropriate priorities for development. However, there is no longer term vision for developing business education, including its role in supporting enterprise education for all students.

- There is good tracking and monitoring of student progress and appropriate interventions are made when students appear to be under achieving or falling behind with their work.
- Teachers are involved in an appropriate range of professional development activities and there is good support for the member of staff who is relatively new to teaching.
- Enterprise education is strongly supported by senior managers and this is reflected in the recent appointment of an enterprise coordinator who is already proving to be effective.
- The training day on enterprise education for all teachers was well received and this has been followed up by a useful audit of current provision.

Inclusion

- Students of all abilities have access to the business course.
- Students are well supported but the tasks they are set are not always sufficiently matched to their needs.
- Whilst there are many enterprise activities available to students, their take up and impact is not sufficiently monitored or assessed.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- providing more opportunities for business students to engage directly with employers and take part in business games and simulations
- developing a longer term view of the place of business education in the curriculum, including the provision of a wider range of courses and its role in enterprise education for all students
- identifying and assessing the learning outcomes students are expected to gain through the programme of enterprise education.

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

David Butler
Her Majesty's Inspector