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Mr R Varey
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Dear Mr Varey

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Business and enterprise education

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 6 November. Because the school does not offer examination courses in business, the visit focused on the provision in enterprise education, including the development of economic and business understanding and financial capability.

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, a discussion with a group of students and a scrutiny of documentation and examples of students' work.

The overall effectiveness of enterprise education was judged to be good. There is good capacity to make further improvement.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are good.

- Students are developing good enterprise skills. They have a sound basic understanding of business and personal finance. Students interviewed were able to discuss issues to do with fair trade and evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of various types of savings and investment but their understanding of how the economy operates was less well developed.

- Students have very good attitudes to learning and enjoy their enterprise education. For example, they spoke very positively about the 'newspaper day', where they had worked with a range of adults other than teachers, and taking part in a cookery competition modelled on a television programme.
- Students were able to identify the skills and attributes for employment they had gained through enterprise learning.

Quality of teaching and learning

It was not possible to view any lessons but the evidence from discussions with students, examples of students' work and the school's own evaluations indicates that teaching and learning are good.

- Students found the enterprise days and lessons that sought to develop enterprise skills enjoyable and interesting because they actively engaged them in learning and were seen as being relevant.
- The emphasis on developing critical skills has been successful in developing more enterprising teaching and learning.
- Good links with local businesses and other organisations are used effectively to enhance students' learning.
- While plans for enterprise activities identify the tasks students are expected to undertake, they do not always identify the understanding, skills and attributes they are intended to develop.
- Individual aspects of students' enterprise learning are assessed but there is insufficient evaluation of their overall progress, for example by the end of Year 9 or Year 11.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum for enterprise education is good.

- Good provision for enterprise education is made through citizenship, suspended timetable days, personal, social and health education and through a range of subjects, but these elements are not yet joined up to form a completely coherent programme.
- There is a strong programme of work experience that includes all students in Year 10 and approximately 17 students take more vocationally oriented courses linked to a local college.
- Extra-curricular activities, such as raising money for charities and organising school performances, provide additional opportunities for students to develop their enterprise skills. The School Council has its own budget and decides on how funds are to be spent.

Leadership and management of business education

The leadership and management of enterprise education are good.

- Work-related learning, including enterprise education, is seen as important and has been made a priority in the school development plan.
- There is a shared understanding of the nature of enterprise education amongst staff that has been promoted through a professional development day and a helpful written statement.
- The separate components of enterprise education are individually well led and managed but there is a lack of overall coordination of work-related learning at a senior level. The teacher with responsibility for enterprise education has a very heavy additional workload and this limits the opportunities available to her to observe and monitor the effectiveness of the provision.
- A useful audit enterprise education through subjects has been undertaken to identify the strengths and gaps in provision.

Inclusion

- All students take part in enterprise activities and work experience and additional opportunities are made available to all students to develop their enterprise skills through extra-curricular activities.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- strengthening the overall coordination of the components of work-related learning, including enterprise education
- identifying the understanding, skills and attributes students are expected to develop at various stages in their education
- improving the assessment of students' progress in enterprise education and the monitoring of the impact of the provision.

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/Local Learning and Skills Council 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
Subject Advisor for Business Education