

Alexandra House    T 08456 404040  
33 Kingsway        F 020 7421 6855  
London                enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
WC2B 6SE            [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



23 January 2008

Mrs K M Winrow  
Headteacher  
Ranelagh C of E School  
Ranelagh Drive  
Bracknell  
Berkshire  
RG12 9DA

Dear Mrs Winrow

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Business education

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 15-16 January 2008 to look at work in business education.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at examination courses in business education, the visit also considered the development of economic and business understanding and financial capability for all students at Key Stage 4 as part of the statutory provision for work-related learning.

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 learners, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of students' work and observation of five lessons.

The overall effectiveness of business education was judged to be outstanding. The provision of examination courses and for developing economic and business understanding for all students is excellent.

Achievement and standards

Students' achievement on examination courses is outstanding.

- Standards at GCSE and in the sixth form are well above national levels.
- Students make excellent progress in relation to their prior attainment at both Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form.

- Independent learning skills are well established and students make excellent use of ICT. The quality of students' note-taking to aid revision is very good.
- In lessons, students feel confident enough to challenge opinions with which they disagree.
- Completion rates for sixth form business courses are excellent.
- By the end of Key Stage 4, students' economic and business understanding, including among students not taking business courses, is outstanding.
- The school has made excellent progress towards meeting its challenging specialist school targets.

### Quality of teaching and learning

Teaching and learning on examination courses are excellent.

- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge. Lessons are consistently well planned, proceed at a fast pace and include a wide variety of learning opportunities. Expectations of students are very high and good use is made of extension activities to stretch the most able. The tenacity, with which teachers challenge students' misunderstanding of concepts and gaps in knowledge, is a particular strength.
- There is a strong focus on developing students' evaluative skills and the use of technical vocabulary. New technologies are well used. Good use is made of links with local businesses.
- Students respond very well to learning opportunities and make excellent progress in lessons. Higher order skills are well developed. Behaviour is excellent, as are student-staff relationships.
- Assessment practice is excellent. Marking is thorough and provides clear judgements, praise and helpful comments to encourage students to improve.
- There is a very good take-up of the wide range of additional learning opportunities, including taking part in a variety of competitions.
- A good range of business texts, journals and daily newspapers is available in the Learning Resource Centre.

### Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the business-related curriculum is outstanding and meets the needs of almost all students extremely well.

- GCSE business courses are very popular, being taken by more than half the students. Take-up of sixth form business courses is also very good.
- An extensive range of enterprise activities provides excellent opportunities for all students to develop their team and problem-solving skills.
- Young Enterprise gives Year 12 students an excellent insight into business planning and collaborative working.

- Students are very well prepared for work experience in Year 11 and there is effective follow up to help them reflect upon the skills and other attributes they have demonstrated during their placements. The many other work-related learning activities at Key Stage 4 provide further excellent opportunities for all students to develop and refine their key skills.
- Personal, social and health education provides excellent opportunities for students to develop financial awareness. These are supplemented by positive contributions from many other subjects and programmes.

### Leadership and management

Leadership and management of business education are excellent.

- In the business studies department, planning mechanisms and systems for monitoring and evaluating performance are very effective.
- There is excellent self-evaluation.
- Teachers have excellent opportunities for professional development.
- At whole-school level, the co-ordination of enterprise education and work-related learning is very good.
- Business education is very well resourced.

### Inclusion

Inclusion is good.

- Examination courses are open to all students.
- There is early identification of students experiencing difficulties on examination courses and effective additional support is provided; it is very rare that students fail to complete courses successfully. However, schemes of work do not sufficiently address the needs of all learners.
- There is no overall system for tracking students' progress in developing economic and business understanding.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- for examination courses, ensuring that schemes of work are differentiated to meet the learning needs of the full range of students
- at whole-school level, building on existing good practice in work-related learning, to put in place a system for tracking students' progress in developing economic and business understanding.

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 the Ofsted website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Vic Chivers  
Her Majesty's Inspector