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25 November 2008

Mr T Billings
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Billings

Ofsted subject survey: identifying good practice in business and enterprise

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff and students, during my visit on 11 November 2008 to look at work in business and enterprise.

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.

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 seven lessons.

Features of good practice observed

- You have very quickly developed a strong commitment from staff at all levels to the college's new specialist status for business and enterprise with ethics. The strategy of developing and publicising around the college a wide range of enterprising messages has supported the college in raising standards and achievements. There is a strong emphasis on celebrating success. Staff and students are encouraged to be innovative.
- All students have the opportunity to study a level 2 vocational course in either information technology or business, along with qualifications designed to help prepare them for their future careers and promote their personal development.
- Enterprise education is being successfully developed across the curriculum. Heads of department and their teams, following staff training, have produced statements on how enterprise education is promoted through their subjects. All subjects have revised their schemes of work to include enterprise skills and attitudes which are effectively monitored by managers through thematic lesson observations. The college's

'enterprising subject status' initiative has been very successful in encouraging innovative curriculum developments and promoting effective links between subjects and businesses.

- The lessons observed during the visit were well planned with a good range of activities to motivate students and develop their enterprise skills, such as problem solving, team work and presentations. Teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic; they use praise effectively and make good use of information technology to support learning. Their highly effective questioning and very good individual support is used well to check on students' progress and maintain a good pace of work in lessons. Students make good progress and the quality of their work is high. Students' ability to apply their ideas and develop practical solutions to problems is particularly impressive.
- An innovative new code of conduct and merit system, sponsored by local businesses and linked to raising money for charity, is proving very effective. Students' behaviour observed during the visit was excellent.
- Students gain considerable benefit from the very good range of high quality links that the college has developed with businesses. A local entrepreneur in residence provides support and advice to individuals and groups of students taking business studies courses. The entrepreneur adds a very realistic dimension to the work and has supported teachers in developing challenging assignments.
- Students enjoy an extensive range of enrichment opportunities; many are linked to developing enterprising young people. For example, sixth form students can apply to participate in the Career Academy that helps them to prepare for their future and provides opportunities to take up internships with leading business organisations.

An area for development, which we discussed, included:

- further improve the methods for tracking and monitoring students' progress in enterprise skills.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop business and enterprise in the college.

As I explained previously, 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

Bev Barlow
Her Majesty's Inspector