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2 January 2009

Mr Joe Sellars
Headteacher
North Axholme School
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Dear Mr Sellars

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Moving through the system

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 12 and 13 November to look at work on developing the future economic well-being of students in your school and careers education. I also looked at how well arrangements are made to support students during their transition into secondary school.

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.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included: scrutiny of relevant documentation, observation of five lessons and interviews with Connexions staff, the chair of governors, school staff and students.

Overall, your work in developing the future economic well-being of students in your school is good. Most students develop a good level of self-confidence and strong social skills in interacting with others in the classroom and around the school. They are generally able to show initiative in lessons. Achievement in basic academic skills is good. Those new to the school settle well. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported exceptionally well. Curriculum pathways in Key Stage 4 are innovative in meeting students' needs and giving them a robust base for development beyond age 16. Older students make good progress in their understanding of options for education and career development; they have good appreciation of the attributes needed for the workplace. Teaching and other opportunities to foster economic well-being and financial awareness are good. The provision is generally well co-ordinated.

Features of effective practice:

- Achievement and standards relating to economic well-being are strong. Achievement in the school is improving. There have been recent innovative and strong improvements in standards in mathematics, and success in a range of appropriate vocational courses.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

This has significantly raised the quality of results at age 16. Attendance is good and exclusions are below the national average. The proportion of school leavers not in education, employment or training has fallen from about 12% to almost zero. Individual needs are identified very effectively; curriculum innovation for those who find difficulty in engaging with education is often excellent. The curriculum is imaginative and entrepreneurial in drawing on funding streams and the goodwill of many partners in education and training and in the wider community. These students thrive and take pride in their achievements. Students new to the school in Year 7, and those joining at other times, are inducted with care; they settle quickly to learning with no anxieties about their new school. Students gain good knowledge and understanding of alternatives within the school and beyond. Older students have secure skills to make decisions about career pathways. Throughout their time at the school there is generally good development of students' financial awareness.

- Teaching and learning in relation to economic well-being are good. Outline planning for complementary studies shows broadly appropriate coverage of topics and issues in personal, social, health and citizenship education, including careers advice and guidance. Work in tutor groups supports personal development, for instance, with records of achievement. Attitudes and relationships in these lessons are very good. Students engage well and demonstrate good teamwork skills. Whilst learning is generally good, and often very good, lessons in this area of the curriculum are not always planned in a way that leads to maximum effectiveness. Development of financial awareness is enhanced through enterprise events that stimulate students' enthusiasm. On broader matters of financial awareness, the mathematics and business studies departments make a good contribution, though there is scope for more systematic integration of this with the school's overall provision for economic well-being.
- Information on alternatives in education and careers beyond age 16 is effective. There are appropriate opportunities to seek information, advice and guidance from an independent personal adviser. Valued informal advice is available from school staff and there is a comprehensive and well-organised library. Presentations by post-16 colleges and others are valued by students and parents.
- Management of the school's work in developing the future economic well-being of students is good. There are action and development plans that set out who is responsible for putting in place each element of provision for specified groups of students and by specified times. Very effective use is made of opportunities available from further education and other providers. Liaison with the Connexions careers advisory service is good. Collaboration with feeder schools and colleges and other destinations is very effective. Resources are generally of good quality. The leadership and management of provision for students who might struggle to engage with learning is excellent. Following feedback from a lifestyle survey carried out by the local Primary Care Trust, some improvements have taken place in careers guidance. However, the monitoring of the school's work for economic well-being is focused largely on what the school provides rather than on specific learning outcomes.



Areas for further improvement, which we discussed, include:

- Lesson planning is not always optimised. On occasions, the paper or computer-based learning materials limit opportunities for free discussion to meet students' learning needs fully. The work of the small, dedicated team for complementary studies is good, but additional in-house expertise on certain topics is not systematically used.
- Evaluation of work for economic well-being gives insufficient attention to what students know, understand and can do and the timeliness of these learning outcomes. In general, the school is keen to assess and evaluate across the wider curriculum. In anticipation of development of the new diplomas, the school is exploring ways of assessing aspects of personal development. Senior staff are aware of the need to track outcomes relating to students' economic well being.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop economic well-being in the school.

As I explained, 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

Jim Bennetts
Additional Inspector

