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Ms Stephanie Quayle
The Head Teacher
St Katherine's School
Ham Green,
Pill,
Bristol,
Somerset,
BS20 0HU

Dear Ms Quayle,

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 Wednesday 4th February and the morning of Tuesday 10th March 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:

- an analysis of a significant amount of written information that you provided both before and during my visits
- discussions with you, 15 senior managers and your Connexions personal advisers
- visits to your personal, social, health and economic well-being programme together with the business studies programmes
- observation of your collapsed day programme for enterprise, technology and media where all students in the school give up their ordinary lessons and undertake tasks in groups
- visits and discussions with students in years 7, 9, and 11, and the sixth form, who gave me their views about the programmes they were on and the progress they were making in your school.

Overall, your work in developing the future economic well-being of students in your school is good with some outstanding features. Almost all students develop a good level of self-confidence and strong team-working skills, which is demonstrated by the initiative and involvement they demonstrate in the classroom and collapsed day activities. Older students make good progress in their financial literacy, and very good progress in their understanding of their career options. Through their work experience and the many other contacts with



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employers, older students also develop a good appreciation of the skills and attributes necessary for success in the workplace.

Features of effective practice:

- The school has science college specialist status and its outreach work supports the local primary schools well. However, it has a large catchment area and almost 80% of the students, come from Bristol. This presents the school with significant opportunities and challenges so that good transition and quick settling in by new students into the school is very important. The school does this very well, working on developing teamwork and the personal skills needed to make good progress.
- Although the school is set in a rural community, it serves the needs of the majority of students who come from the outskirts of Bristol. The school has a very good understanding of the context of its own economic position and the need to support students in maximising their economic potential. In the past few years, it has raised standards of achievement and is working hard to improve the achievement of students. However, standards in mathematics remain low although current initiatives are starting to improve these.
- Good external links bring a richness to the work within the classroom, offering students the opportunity to understand the world outside school that they will enter. Employers give freely of their time and resources they can offer. A large energy management company has developed an energy workshop game specifically for the school. This has been shared nationally. A newly formed local transport company has used its start-up plans as a case study model for business studies students.
- At Key Stages 4 and 5, alternative pathways allow students to follow a range of vocational and academic courses. At the end of Year 9, students choose the subjects they would like to study. The school responds by constructing a timetable to ensure that the vast majority of students have a curriculum that is personalised to their needs, interests and aspirations.
- All students interviewed, commented on the close personal relationships in the school both between students and with their teachers. Teachers guide and mentor their students very effectively. This enables the students to make wise choices based on their interests and capabilities and enormous care is taken to ensure students progress appropriately. Careers education and guidance is conscientiously carried out with a commitment to ensuring that students get the best quality impartial advice. In the sixth form, this is mainly done through the close relationships that the students have developed with their pastoral and subject teachers. Students in all years have a clear understanding of their strengths and aspire to improve their work to achieve the best results they can.
- The breadth of the curriculum includes models of good practice. The regular collapsed days engage young people in a different mode of working. Here, team-working skills, organisation of work and a quick response to the tasks set enable them to go from a design challenge, for example a packaging product, to an outcome within the confines of a school day.

- All Year 10 students are able to go on work experience for a week. They are given the responsibility to find a placement that they would enjoy and the school, together with the local authority's work experience organisation, ensures that they attend a suitable placement. Some students in Years 10 and 11, and some students in the sixth form, attend more regular work experience, often linked to their vocational courses or aspirations.

Areas for further improvement, which we discussed, include:

- Integrate numeracy skills across the curriculum, especially in areas linked with the world of work, to support the raising of standards in mathematics.

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

Andrew Lyons,
Additional inspector