

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



19 March 2010

Mr J Newby
Headteacher
Castle View School
Meppel Avenue
Canvey Island
Essex
SS8 9RZ

Dear Mr Newby

Ofsted 2009-10 subject survey inspection programme: business education

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and students, during my visit on 2 and 3 February 2010 to look at work in business education.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the subject the visit had a particular focus on the impact of 14 to 19 developments in business education.

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 included: interviews with staff and learners; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of students' work; and observation of nine lessons, a Year 10 assembly, a mentoring session and two extra-curricular activities.

The overall effectiveness of business education, including the development of students' economic and business understanding and financial capability is satisfactory with good features.

Achievement in business education

Achievement in business education is satisfactory, with good features.

- Although the unvalidated 2009 examination results show attainment of students taking GCSE business courses to be well below that nationally, evidence from lessons and discussions with students confirm that attainment on current business courses is higher and broadly in line with

the national picture. Students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are making satisfactory, and in some cases good, progress in relation to their prior attainment and targets.

- Students have good attitudes to learning and demonstrate a reasonable capacity to learn independently. They engage well in group discussions in lessons and behaviour is good.
- Students not taking business examination courses develop good, and in some cases very good, economic and business understanding and financial/enterprise capabilities.

Quality of teaching in business education

The quality of teaching in business education is satisfactory, with good features.

- Teaching is at least satisfactory and this is reflected in the progress made by students.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and teach with confidence.
- Lessons are planned well and employ a satisfactory range of teaching styles. However, in business studies, there are insufficient opportunities for students to develop and practise their evaluative skills.
- Teachers place a strong focus on reinforcing students' knowledge and understanding of key business vocabulary. Good use is made of case-study material, including local and real-world examples.
- Effective use is made of information and communication technology to support teaching and learning where appropriate.
- All students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are supported well in their learning.
- Students receive good feedback on the progress they are making and how they need to improve. Good support is provided to help them prepare for examinations.

Quality of the curriculum in business education

The quality of the curriculum in business education is good.

- Examination courses in business meet the needs of students satisfactorily.
- There are very good opportunities for all students to develop their economic and business understanding and financial capability. Many subjects and programmes, including work experience and the extensive range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities, make significant contributions.
- Students enjoy a wide range of enterprise and problem-solving activities. Within these, there are very good opportunities for students to engage directly with employers. However, in business studies, there is scope for developing these further.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in business education

The effectiveness of leadership and management in business education is good.

- In business studies, there is good, recent evidence of improved attainment and achievement. Self-evaluation is good and this has helped to develop realistic strategies for securing improvement. Students are set challenging targets, their progress towards them is closely monitored and interventions are made when there are signs of underachievement. Departmental planning is good and appropriate schemes of work are in place. Staff performance is monitored effectively and support for professional development is good.
- Students' developing economic and business understanding and financial/enterprise capabilities are not assessed systematically as they move through the school. The school has an overview of provision and enterprise capabilities have been defined. Mechanisms are also in place, for example, to assess key skills and personal attributes demonstrated during work experience. However, the links between all the various initiatives are currently not coordinated sufficiently well.

Subject issue: the impact of 14 to 19 developments in business education

- The school is at an early stage of developing 14 to 19 provision for all learners in business education. Plans include the introduction of the Diploma in Business, Administration and Finance, which is being developed in collaboration with other local providers.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- providing business studies students with additional opportunities to develop and practise their evaluative skills and to engage with local businesses and employers
- improving coordination of provision to develop a unified system for tracking and monitoring students' economic and business understanding and financial/enterprise capabilities as they move through the school.

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