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Ms S Rogers
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Rogers

Ofsted 2010-11 subject survey inspection programme: business education

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and students, during my visit on 27 and 28 April 2010 to look at work 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.

As no examination courses in business studies are provided specifically, the visit focused on the wider provision the school is making to develop students' enterprise capabilities and their understanding of economics, business and personal finance.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included: interviews with staff and students; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of students' work; and observation of eight lessons and a Young Enterprise team meeting.

The overall effectiveness of the provision to develop students' enterprise skills and understanding of economics, business and personal finance is satisfactory with good features.

Main findings

- Students develop a reasonable understanding of economics, business and personal finance by the end of Year 11. For example, many have a basic understanding of loans, taxation, inflation and profit. Students attending vocational courses gain an insight into various business practices.

- Students develop good enterprise skills through a good range of enrichment and 'challenge' activities. Most participate well in raising funds for charities.
- Students have very good attitudes to learning and behaviour in lessons is excellent. Many show good levels of self-confidence and independent learning skills.
- In Key Stage 3, opportunities for students to develop their economic and business understanding and personal financial capability are adequate.
- The programme of work-related learning at Key Stage 4 is well organised, including two weeks of work experience for all students. Preparation and follow-up are well organised and thorough. During their placements, students are encouraged to explore business structures and job roles.
- Several subjects are making good attempts to embed economic and business understanding in the curriculum, having identified, for example, global, personal finance and enterprise themes. However, in the lessons observed and the curriculum plans scrutinised, intended learning outcomes were not sufficiently explicit to support this development work effectively.
- Various different groups of students have very good opportunities to engage directly with employers. These could be extended to benefit all students.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- making the provision more coherent to develop students' economic, business and financial understanding and enterprise capabilities by:
 - making intended learning outcomes explicit in the curriculum
 - ensuring lesson planning and students' progress are monitored as they move through the school
- providing more frequent opportunities for all students to engage with employers.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop business education in the school.

As I explained previously, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be published on the Ofsted website under the URN for your school. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Vic Chivers
Her Majesty's Inspector