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Ms A Cole
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Cole

Ofsted 2010–11 subject survey inspection programme: economics and business education

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and students, during my visit on 21 and 22 March 2011 to look at work in economics and 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 without their consent.

As the school does not provide formally assessed courses in economics or business, the visit focused on the development of economics and business understanding, and personal financial and enterprise capability for all students.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included: interviews with staff and students; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of students' work; and observation of seven lessons, two year-group assemblies, an enterprise activity and an extended learning activity on climate change.

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

Achievement in economics and business education

Achievement in economics and business education is good.

- Students are developing good economics and business understanding, enterprise skills and personal financial capability. They enjoy this part of

their studies and talk about what they have learnt reflectively, confidently and with considerable insight.

- In the lessons observed, students demonstrated a broad range of attainment but their learning and progress were good. They worked with purpose and enthusiasm on interesting and relevant tasks and activities. They worked well in pairs and in groups, taking part in discussion, carrying out investigation and working independently of their teachers.
- Students used information and communication technology (ICT) well to carry out research on the internet and to work out business-related calculations using spreadsheet software.

Quality of teaching in economics and business education

The quality of teaching in economics and business education is good.

- In the lessons observed, teachers planned well for students' prior attainment and demonstrated appropriately high expectations of them. They were highly successful in engaging students' interest and involvement through a wide range of relevant and well-designed tasks and activities that were matched well to what students were intended to learn.
- In the lessons observed, teachers made very good and imaginative use of a variety of resources, and where appropriate, made extremely good use of ICT to enhance learning.
- Across the range of subjects observed, teachers had very good knowledge of business and economics concepts. They made good and frequent use of topical, real-life examples to help students learn.
- In the lessons observed, teachers' use of questioning to check and extend learning, and to challenge and develop their thinking was often very strong. Where lessons were less successful in this respect, more vocal students were allowed to dominate and teachers made insufficient use of directed questioning; teachers were too ready to summarise students' responses and were too easily satisfied with basic answers. As a result, teachers progressed on to the next stage of the lesson on a few occasions before consolidating students' understanding.
- The marking of students' work is detailed and thorough and provides them with very good guidance on how to improve the quality of their work. Feedback provides a clear view of the progress students are making towards their targets.

Quality of the curriculum in economics and business education

The quality of the curriculum in economics and business education is outstanding.

- At whole-school level, a coherent and very well-designed programme of study with citizenship and personal and social education at the core, and excellent links to key subjects of ICT, mathematics and geography meets the needs and interests of students very successfully.

- Students have very good opportunities to engage with businesses and other organisations for work experience, enterprise and work-related learning.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in economics and business education

Leadership and management in economics and business education are outstanding.

- The vision for developing students for the world of work is exceptionally clear and is integral to the school's ethos of aspiration, attainment, moral purpose and values for its students. Provision for economics and business understanding, financial and enterprise capability has a very high profile in the life of the school. The coordination and management of this work are excellent.
- Leaders and managers have a very good understanding of strengths and areas for improvement in the provision; they are highly successful in promoting a culture of continuous improvement with students' achievements at the centre of their work.
- The well-conceived arrangements for assessment and target-setting of students' achievements in relation to the very clearly expressed learning outcomes are rigorous.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- spreading the good practice that exists in the use of directed questioning to check students' understanding and to extend their learning, in order to raise their achievements further.

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

As I explained previously, a copy of this letter will be published on the Ofsted website. It may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection. Except in the case of academies, a copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

Russell Jordan
Her Majesty's Inspector