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Mrs C Moon and Mr G Nichols
Executive Principal and Headteacher
The Business Academy Bexley
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Dear Mrs Moon and Mr Nichols

Ofsted 2011–12 subject survey inspection programme: citizenship

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and students, during my visit on 8 and 9 June 2011 to look at work in citizenship.

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 included: interviews with staff and students; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of students' work; and observation of six lessons as well as other activities including students' leadership meetings and an assembly.

The overall effectiveness of citizenship is good.

Achievement in citizenship

Achievement in citizenship is good.

- Standards at GCSE are satisfactory with 54% of the cohort gaining Grade C or above, representing good progress. GCSE coursework provides evidence of critical awareness and campaigning activity on issues, such as youth crime and recycling.
- Standards at AS and A2 are satisfactory, also representing good achievement.
- In the lessons observed, students achieved well and enjoyed learning about issues, such as crime and political ideology.

- Lower attaining students, in a lesson observed, made particularly good progress because they were motivated to read for understanding, to discuss issues, share ideas and explain them in writing.
- Many students in the Academy are outstanding role models in their exercise of leadership roles; these are widely distributed and effective in supporting daily life and school improvement.
- Students also achieve well in a range of wider citizenship activities, from a local to global scale. For example, it is impressive that 90 students recently took part in the 15 kilometre 'Bridges to Africa' walk.

Quality of teaching in citizenship

The quality of teaching in citizenship is good.

- Lessons observed ranged from outstanding to satisfactory. Other evidence, including students' work, confirmed a picture of generally good teaching, including effective but inconsistent use of assessment through marking and comments.
- Characteristics of good and outstanding teaching included careful planning, well-understood ground rules that enabled the use of a wide range of learning styles, very positive relationships, high expectations of all students and expert use of technology.
- Specialist citizenship teachers have taken the opportunity to inform planning and pedagogy within the humanities department to good effect.
- Assessment is given high priority in planning and in lessons, but some misconceptions were apparent in relation to the link between lesson objectives and National Curriculum assessment and levels.
- Evidence from observations and students' work suggests that challenge could be greater for higher attainers and sixth-form students in terms of planning and selection of resources.

Quality of the curriculum in citizenship

The quality of the curriculum in citizenship is good.

- Reflecting changes being made to the curriculum as a whole, the citizenship curriculum is developing, building on solid foundations.
- The Key Stage 3 curriculum provides all students with a comprehensive citizenship programme within a thematic humanities course. As well as having strong citizenship themes, good links are made between subjects.
- In Key Stage 4, past, present and planned programmes include GCSE and AS citizenship as discrete options as well as coverage through humanities. As programmes have developed, the Academy has sought to retain an entitlement to citizenship.
- Medium-term plans are evolving but examples of current planning are good in several respects. Some lesson planning was outstanding in taking account of individuals' learning needs and in the productive sequencing of

lessons. Overall, however, the approach to defining learning objectives and outcomes in planning is an area of relative weakness.

- The core programme is augmented by a wide range of opportunities including outstanding attention to the development of leadership roles. These include house and Academy student leadership groups, the regular current affairs sessions in tutorials and house assemblies and a very wide range of extra-curricular opportunities including a strong international dimension.
- Students also have many opportunities to take responsibility in the school and wider community.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in citizenship

The effectiveness of leadership and management in citizenship is good.

- Citizenship is central to the aims and values of the Academy and is very strongly promoted and supported by senior leaders, as manifested in the priority given to student leadership, taking responsibility and 'respect for all'.
- Citizenship is well resourced in terms of staffing and material resources and has a prominent place in the curriculum and the broader life of the school.
- Development planning for citizenship is thorough and well targeted.
- Subject leadership of citizenship is developing in scope and experience, working within the humanities faculty. Steps have been taken to analyse outcomes and monitor provision. Work remains to be done in providing support, particularly for non-specialists and in aspects of citizenship such as teaching about controversial issues. Schemes of work have been prepared but do not as yet provide for progression, for example between key stages.
- Citizenship makes a strong contribution to the promotion of community cohesion in the Academy and beyond.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- reviewing medium- and short-term planning in the context of progression in the National Curriculum and GCSE, with clearer definition of learning outcomes at each level
- developing the role of the subject leader, drawing on expertise within the school and more widely
- increasing the level of challenge for higher attaining and sixth-form students.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop citizenship 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

Scott Harrison
Additional Inspector