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Mr Paul Rossi
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Rossi

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Business education

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 23 May to look at work in business education. As the school does not provide any examination courses in business at Key Stage 4, the visit focussed on the development of economic and business understanding and personal finance education for all students.

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. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included: interviews with staff and students, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of students' work and observation of parts of ten lessons.

The overall effectiveness of the provision for economic and business understanding and personal finance education was judged to be good.

Strengths in provision

- The leadership and management of this aspect of the curriculum are good. There is enthusiastic leadership of enterprise and the delivery of economic and business understanding is managed well.
- Students are prepared well for work experience. This is used well when they return to school, making the activity productive and valuable.

- There has been good evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of this area of the curriculum, leading to change and improved provision. Student surveys, along with classroom observation, have been used effectively to monitor and improve provision.
- There is well planned curriculum coverage of the aspects of economic and business understanding found in the citizenship programme of study.
- Teaching has improved through the school's monitoring systems and some element of subject training for tutors. Most Year 11 students enjoy their lessons. However, the quality of teaching and learning is variable. The experience and progress of students is too dependant on the commitment to the subject of their form tutor.
- The recent Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD) project provides an excellent example of using enterprise activity as a vehicle for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness and understanding.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included the need to:

- improve assessment so that students are encouraged to develop a wider range of skills that go beyond factual recall
- bring the quality of teaching in personal, social and health education and citizenship education up to that found more generally in the school
- further develop financial understanding to explore areas such as the risks of cumulative interest when using credit cards.

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/Local Learning and Skills Council and will be published on Ofsted's website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Adrian Lyons
Her Majesty's Inspector