

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

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



28 March 2011

Mr D Milne
Acting Headteacher
Beacon Hill Community School
Market Square
Aspatria
Wigton
CA7 3EZ

Dear Mr Milne

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 15 and 16 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.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included: interviews with staff and students; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of students' work; and observation of parts of eight lessons and one assembly.

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.

- Although students' attainment in GCSE business studies in 2010 was low in comparison to national average results, evidence during the visit suggests that current Year 11 students are making good progress in their learning. They enjoy the subject and are able to make good links with real business issues.
- Students have good attitudes to learning, are actively involved and engaged in learning during lessons and demonstrate good independent and group learning skills. They know their target grades and where they are currently in relation to these.

- As a result of the school's well-planned provision, all students are developing good enterprise and work-related skills, including the ability to work effectively in groups, to collaborate productively, to listen to each other and to discuss and negotiate in order to solve problems and evaluate evidence. Their financial capability is developing well. Although some students have a very good awareness of the local economic context, few understand the broader economic environment in which they live.

Quality of teaching in economics and business education

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

- Teachers' exposition is clear and well matched to students' abilities. Lessons move at a brisk pace and involve a variety of learning activities to engage students and encourage their progress.
- Teachers make constant reference to real business examples. In business studies, this effectively links students' learning in the classroom to the world outside. In relation to whole-school enterprise education provision, this encourages students to recognise the importance of their learning to their future lives.
- Questioning is generally good and in some lessons it is outstanding, with teachers challenging students to provide well-developed responses that extend and deepen their understanding and their ability to demonstrate higher level skills.
- Teachers are confident in their use of technology, which enhances the quality of teaching and learning.
- Relationships between teachers and students are very good. Students are very well supported in lessons and encouraged to raise their aspirations about what they can achieve. Additional support sessions are provided out of class and all students in Year 11 have the support of a learning mentor.

Quality of the curriculum in economics and business education

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

- The current GCSE business course will be discontinued once the current Year 11 students finish their examinations. The school provides a good balance of vocational courses and good links with local post-16 providers ensure appropriate progression opportunities for all students.
- A mixture of delivery modes contributes to the good quality of whole-school enterprise education. These include discrete weekly personal development lessons for all students, cross-subject provision (for example in humanities, media studies, mathematics, design and technology and information and communication technology) and suspended timetable themed days. In addition, less able and more vulnerable students study for ASDAN award modules based in a horticultural context.
- Careers information, advice and guidance are strengths in promoting good work-related learning and developing good employability skills.

- All students have good opportunities to engage with local businesses and employers and these enhance the whole-school enterprise education provision. Extra-curricular and enrichment activities related to enterprise education are numerous and all students have access to some of these.
- Overall, the whole-school provision for enterprise education covers enterprise and financial capability well and is particularly good in developing students' work-related skills. However, it is less well focused on developing their broader understanding of the economic environment.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in economics and business education

Leadership and management in economics and business education are good.

- Leaders are very committed to ensuring that the curriculum prepares students well for their future lives - whether in employment or in further education and beyond. In this context, they are proactive in constantly evaluating the curriculum in order to ensure that it meets the needs of students as fully as possible.
- The whole-school enterprise education programme is well coordinated and uses the strengths of both teaching and non-teaching staff. Cross-subject audits identify opportunities for students to develop relevant aspects of enterprise education in a range of different subjects and whole-school provision supplements this with more broad-based learning activities.
- There is plenty of evidence of evaluation of such activities, however, much of this relates to how well sessions went and whether students enjoyed them. There was less evidence of the formal monitoring of students' progress against identified learning outcomes for enterprise education.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- extending the focus on economic and business understanding within the whole-school provision for enterprise education to encourage a more informed awareness by students of the economic environment in which they live
- considering how to monitor and assess students' progress in relation to identified learning outcomes for enterprise education.

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

Gwen Coates
Her Majesty's Inspector