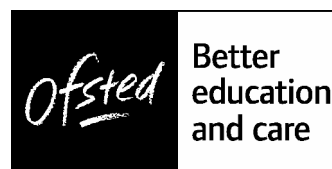


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29 March 2007

Mr Gordon Clubb
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Clubb

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Financial Capability Survey

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 27 March to look at work in personal finance 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. 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 and observation of one citizenship lesson.

The overall effectiveness of personal financial education was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards in financial capability

- Standards are good and students achieve well. Aspects of personal finance education are included in the GCSE citizenship course, taken by all students, and results are good.
- Discussions with students revealed a good understanding of personal finance, for example, the problems associated with personal debt and distinguishing between planned and unplanned debt.

Quality of teaching and learning in financial capability

The quality of teaching and learning in personal financial education is good.

- Students benefit from teachers' expert knowledge and the use of relevant and interesting examples drawn from their own experiences.
- Teachers deploy a wide range of teaching and learning styles, including teacher-led discussion, group work and presentations.
- Students feel well supported and are made aware of how to improve their work through helpful written comments and oral feedback.
- Students in Year 9 complete their 10 week programme by producing a presentation using information and communication technology (ICT). ICT is used regularly for producing work and this helps maintain student interest. However, ICT was less well used to support teaching and learning, for example through using computer simulations.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum provision is good.

- Elements of personal finance education are identified for each year through the 'preparation for adult life' course. The Year 9 'skills' course, comprising of around thirty lessons, is a very well thought out introduction to economic understanding. Taken together with the elements of personal finance included in GCSE citizenship, the school offers its students a coherent programme. However, there is only a limited contribution to personal finance education from other subjects.
- Sixth formers are well prepared for coping with the financial implications of higher education.
- There are too few opportunities for students to consider different ethical, cultural and religious approaches to money and finance.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management of personal financial education are good.

- Different courses are managed by different individuals but an auditing process has been used to ensure students receive a coherent experience.
- Teachers have relevant subject expertise. For example, the Year 9 'skills' course is taught by business education specialists.
- The quality of teaching and learning is monitored. The strengths and weaknesses of provision are known and understood and this leads to continuing improvement.

Inclusion

- All pupils get an equal entitlement to personal financial education.

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

- develop further opportunities across the curriculum for subjects to contribute to the understanding of personal finance issues
- consider further opportunities to develop students' understanding of different cultural attitudes to money and finance.

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

As I explained in my previous letter, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority 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