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Mr J O'Hara  
Headteacher  
St Benedict's Catholic College  
Norman Way  
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Dear Mr O'Hara

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Business education (good practice visit)

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 29 January 2009 with David Butler HMI, to look at work in business education.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the subject, the visit had a particular focus on economic and business understanding 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.

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 two lessons.

Features of good practice observed

- The excellent range of opportunities that are provided to develop students' enterprise skills and capabilities through the curriculum, including extra-curricular activities.
- The way students develop the confidence and skills they need for adult life.
- The strong programme of work experience that is built up from Year 8 and is integrated into the curriculum.
- The strong commitment of senior and middle leaders to the promotion of business and enterprise education for all students, together with a clear view of how the specialism interrelates with the school's ethos.

- The effective programme of business mentoring that supports a substantial number of students in Year 11.

Areas for development, that we agreed, included:

- implementing plans to offer a wider range of specialist business courses to better meet the needs and interests of all students
- strengthening the provision to develop students' understanding of the economy and personal finance
- improving the arrangements for monitoring students' business and enterprise experiences and assessing the progress they are making so that those who are less well engaged can be more consistently identified and supported.

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 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