

Developing young people's economic and business understanding

Business education in secondary schools, colleges and initial teacher training
2004/07

This report evaluates the strengths and weaknesses in business education for 14–19-year-olds in schools and colleges, and in the provision of initial training of teachers to teach business education in schools. It explores current issues in business education, including the development of economic and business understanding and financial capability for all students at Key Stage 4.

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE
T 08456 404040

www.ofsted.gov.uk

Reference no. 070096

© Crown Copyright 2008



Contents

Executive summary	4
Key findings	5
Recommendations	6
The scope of business lessons	7
Part A: Business education 2004/07	8
Achievement and standards	8
Teaching and learning	10
Curriculum provision	14
Developing economic and business understanding for all learners	16
Leadership and management	16
Professional development	18
Initial teacher training in business education	18
Part B: Current issues in business education	19
Developing economic and business understanding for all students in secondary schools	19
The diversity of business qualifications and forms of assessment	23
The coursework debate	24
The impact of the business and enterprise specialism	26
Notes	29
Further information	30
Publications	30
Websites	30

Executive summary

This report evaluates the effectiveness of business education for 14–19-year-olds in schools and colleges from April 2004 to December 2007 and the quality of initial teacher training. It also discusses current issues in business education. For the purposes of the report, business education includes examination courses such as economics and business studies, as well as the development of economic and business understanding and financial capability for all 14–16-year-old students.

The report draws on survey inspection visits to 118 secondary schools, selected to represent a geographical spread of different types of school. Evidence was also drawn from inspections of schools, colleges and providers of initial teacher training, as well as examination data.

There is much to celebrate in business education. Business courses remain popular, particularly among male students, at Key Stage 4 and post-16. Most students enjoy their courses and see them as being relevant to their future economic well-being. Examination results have improved in line with the average for all subjects. In the schools in the survey, achievement was good or better in around two thirds and unsatisfactory in less than one in 20. This reflected the quality of teaching and learning, which was rarely inadequate and was good or better in around seven in 10 of the schools. Business education departments were led and managed well in approximately seven in 10 of the schools visited. Evidence from 2004/05, the last year in which the subject was inspected as part of institutional college inspections, showed that the quality of teaching and learning was good or better in around six in 10 of the colleges and unsatisfactory in one in 20.

The number of specialist business and enterprise schools has expanded very rapidly. While their impact on raising standards is no greater than for specialist schools generally, they have been successful in leading curriculum development in business and enterprise education and disseminating good practice. The best business and enterprise schools visited during the survey had used their specialism very effectively to become outstanding schools.

Although considerable progress has been made in business education, some of the shortcomings identified before 2004 remain. While the majority of the teaching of business examination courses seen during the survey was good, too much of the rest was uninspiring. This is disappointing, given students' general enthusiasm for the subject, the improved access to information technology and the availability of excellent resources to support learning. One of the reasons why teaching was not better was because of the variation in the availability and quality of professional development for the subject. Students' lack of direct contact with employers and local businesses, even on applied and vocational courses, continued to be a weakness in around half the schools and colleges.

Students gained a range of business qualifications, arrived at through very different forms of assessment. The report raises some concerns about the skills, knowledge and understanding students were able to demonstrate when coursework was almost the only means of assessment. Coursework was often very descriptive and gave too little attention to analysing and evaluating real problems in business. Although well-designed coursework assignments assessed skills that could not be assessed easily in external examinations and, in some cases, produced outstanding work, a strong argument exists for robust moderation systems. These might help to ensure the quality and credibility of qualifications that are assessed mainly internally.

Initiatives to develop economic and business understanding and financial capability for all students at Key Stage 4 have met with mixed success. In just under half the schools visited, students' understanding of basic economic and business ideas was weak. Ofsted's survey of personal finance education revealed poor financial capability among many young people.¹ Provision for economic and business understanding and personal finance education was weakest when it was not given dedicated curriculum time and was taught by non-specialists. Many of the schools failed to define the expected learning outcomes; few evaluated the provision or assessed students' progress.

The quality of initial teacher training for business education was good or better in nearly all the providers inspected during 2005/07. The changing nature of business education and its increasing role in the whole curriculum presents very considerable challenges to trainers and trainees. However, the high quality of many trainees in business education bodes well for the subject's future.

Key findings

- In the schools surveyed, business courses continued to be popular options at Key Stage 4 and post-16, particularly for male students. The majority of the students interviewed enjoyed their courses and saw them as relevant to their future economic well-being. The proportion of students who continued from GCE AS to A2 was often high and many went on to take business-related courses at university.
- Standards, as reflected by national examination results, have generally improved in line with the average for all subjects. Results in GCSE business studies in 2007 remained below the average for all subjects, largely reflecting the students' prior attainment. Results in GCE A-level business studies in 2007 were in line with the average for all subjects and above it in GCE A-level economics.
- Although there was very little unsatisfactory teaching in the schools surveyed, around a third of the lessons were uninspiring. Teachers were using information technology and other resources more effectively than in the past to support learning but there was scope for further development. The availability and quality

¹ *Developing financially capable young people: a survey of good practice in personal finance education for 11–18-year-olds in schools and colleges (070029)*, Ofsted, 2008.

of subject-specific support to improve teaching and learning varied considerably across the schools.

- In around half the schools and colleges visited, students had insufficient opportunities to engage directly with businesses and employers as part of their courses. This made their learning experiences, particularly for those taking applied and vocational courses, less directly relevant.
- Coursework enabled some students to demonstrate skills that were not easily assessed by examinations but, too often, the work was predominantly descriptive with insufficient emphasis on analysis and evaluation. Courses assessed mainly through coursework often revealed students' weak grasp of key concepts and their inability to apply their business understanding to different contexts.
- Fewer than half the schools visited had explicit and comprehensive programmes to develop the economic and business understanding and financial capability of all students at Key Stage 4. Consequently, in these schools, students' basic understanding of economics, business and personal finance was often weak.
- The quality of initial teacher training for business teachers was good in nearly all the providers inspected. The providers had adapted well to changing needs in business education. The quality of newly qualified teachers in the schools inspected was often good.
- The number of specialist business and enterprise schools has expanded rapidly. Evidence that the specialism is raising standards and achievement is limited so far, but it is leading to considerable improvements in curriculum provision.

Recommendations

The Department for Children, Schools and Families, the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills and the Training and Development Agency for Schools should:

- ensure consistent and high-quality professional development and training for teachers of business education to help them improve their teaching
- promote more strongly the development of economic and business understanding for all students as part of the statutory provision for work-related learning and citizenship education.

The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority should:

- provide detailed guidance on the learning outcomes that all students at Key Stages 3 and 4 are expected to gain in terms of economic and business understanding and financial capability
- provide guidance on how schools and colleges can assess and monitor the progress students make in developing economic and business understanding and financial capability

- ensure that robust moderation systems exist to monitor the quality of qualifications that are assessed mainly internally through coursework assignments.

Schools and colleges should:

- ensure that coursework assignments place sufficient emphasis on students' demonstration of the skills of analysis and evaluation
- provide opportunities for students taking business courses to engage with employers and businesses
- provide explicit and coherent programmes to develop all students' economic and business understanding and financial capability, making the most effective use of the expertise of specialist teachers
- develop further the use of information technology and other resources to enliven lessons.

The scope of business lessons

1. For the purposes of this report, business education is defined as the context in which young people develop their knowledge, understanding and critical awareness of the nature and role of businesses and their organisation; the economic environment in which businesses operate; and the contribution businesses make to the creation of wealth and the satisfaction of human wants and needs. Business education also contributes to developing the personal skills, understanding and attributes necessary for living and working in a modern industrialised economy.
2. In schools, business education is taught through a range of optional examination subjects. At Key Stage 4, the large majority of students who take an examination course in business study either GCSE business studies or GCSE applied business. The situation is more complex in post-16 education. In schools, GCE A-level business studies, applied business and economics are the most popular options, with growing interest in National Certificate and Diploma courses. In colleges, there is a plethora of business courses, particularly in general further education colleges. Apart from GCE A-level and National Certificate and Diploma courses in business, a very wide range of professional qualifications is available in subjects such as finance and accountancy, marketing and business administration.
3. Aspects of business education are also included in the statutory requirements for all students in Key Stage 4 as part of work-related learning and citizenship education. The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's framework for work-related learning states that students should be able to 'outline the main types of business enterprise and the key roles within each' and 'demonstrate a basic

knowledge and understanding of a range of economic concepts'. From September 2008, a new non-statutory programme of study for economic well-being and financial capability is to be introduced for all 11–16-year-old students.

4. This report focuses on both the provision for business education through examination courses for 14–19-year-olds and the wider provision for economic and business understanding and financial capability at Key Stage 4.

Part A: Business education 2004/07

Achievement and standards

5. GCSE and GCE A-level examination results in business and economics over the period 2004/07 have generally risen in line with the average for all subjects. The proportion of students who attained A*–C grades in GCSE business studies in 2007 was 62% – about 5% below geography and history. However, the prior attainment of students GCSE business studies is below average. Girls attain better results than boys in GCSE business studies but the gender gap is narrower than in most other subjects. The proportion of students attaining A*–C grades in GCSE applied business has improved from 45% in 2004 to 52% in 2007, and is about 8% above the average for applied GCSEs.
6. The proportions of students aged 16–18 in schools and colleges who attained grades A–C and A–E in GCE A2 business studies in 2007 are in line with the average for all subjects, although the proportion who attained grades A–B is below average. Results in GCE A2 economics were above average, including the proportion attaining grades A–B. In 2007, 36.4% of students attained an A grade in GCE A-level economics, compared with 18.2% in business studies. The proportion of students attaining higher grades in GCE A2 applied business is in line with other applied subjects.
7. Evidence from institutional inspections during 2004/05 showed that achievement in business education was good or better in nearly two thirds of schools at Key Stage 4 and eight out of 10 schools post-16. It was unsatisfactory in fewer than one in 20 schools. Achievement in the subject was good or better in around six in 10 of the schools surveyed during 2004/07 and satisfactory in over a third.
8. Achievement in business education was judged to be good or better in around six out of 10 colleges where it was inspected as part of an institutional inspection in 2004/05 and unsatisfactory in one in 20. Changes in the way colleges have been inspected since 2004/05 mean that the evidence from more recent inspections is not directly comparable, but in the colleges where business was inspected, the large majority of students made at least satisfactory progress.

9. The students in the survey achieved well when they had a good grasp of key concepts and vocabulary and were able to apply their understanding to a range of different contexts. They were able to present coherent arguments and weigh up different solutions to problems on the basis of evidence. The most effective schools and colleges helped students develop their analytical and evaluative skills, as in the following example.

A weak understanding by GCE A-level business studies students of what examiners meant by analysis and evaluation was identified as an important shortcoming. In order to overcome this, teachers asked students to mark each other's responses to an examination question, highlighting statements which they thought demonstrated analysis and evaluation. Their findings were discussed and it became apparent that some students confused opinions that were not supported by evidence with evaluation that was. Examples of statements were provided and students had to say whether they were opinions or evaluations. Finally, students were given the awarding body's mark scheme for the question so they could see how analysis and evaluation were rewarded.

10. The quality of coursework for examinations in the schools and colleges visited varied a great deal. The best work occurred when teachers set students tasks that they could realistically investigate and when they had access to good data and other information. Weaker work was mainly descriptive with little evidence of first-hand research or direct contact with businesses. Discussions with students taking courses assessed entirely through internally marked assignments often revealed a weak grasp of key concepts and a lack of ability to apply business understanding to different contexts. The modular nature of these courses also meant that students sometimes had too few opportunities to draw on the knowledge and skills they had gained across units of work to tackle generic problems and issues. Part B of this report discusses coursework further.
11. The progress students made was clearly very dependent on the quality of teaching. However, visits to schools and colleges also revealed the crucial importance of the support that students received outside the classroom. This included good feedback on written work, rigorous monitoring of their progress, effective intervention strategies and the provision of high-quality resources to support learning. The most effective colleges and school sixth forms also invested considerable time and effort in ensuring that they placed students on the business courses that suited them best, and this helped to maintain high completion rates. Some of these aspects are considered later in this report.
12. No national benchmarks exist for evaluating standards and achievement in economic and business understanding for all students as part of the statutory provision for work-related learning at Key Stage 4. In the schools visited, the learning outcomes that students were meant to achieve were rarely identified or assessed. Inspectors therefore relied mainly on interviews with students, lesson observations and looking at the quality of written work to evaluate

students' level of economic and business understanding. They found that students not taking business examination courses had a weak understanding of basic economic and business ideas in almost half the schools. For example, students were often uncertain about what was meant by inflation and its impact, the ownership of public companies and how profits were calculated. Part B discusses the reasons for the failure of a substantial proportion of the schools to develop economic and business understanding for all their students.

Teaching and learning

13. In 2004/05, business education teaching was judged as good or better in around seven out of 10 schools where it was inspected as part of an institutional inspection. It was unsatisfactory in around one in 30. In the schools included in the subject survey, the quality of teaching and learning was good or better in over two thirds. Although it was inadequate in a few lessons, it was rarely unsatisfactory overall. Teaching was better in schools with sixth forms than in 11–16 schools. The quality of teaching by newly qualified teachers was often good. Despite this overall positive picture, there were very few examples of outstanding teaching. In approximately one third of lessons, teaching was thorough but uninspiring.
14. Institutional inspections of colleges in 2004/05 indicated that teaching and learning were good or better in around seven out of 10 colleges and unsatisfactory in one in 20. Teaching and learning were better in sixth form colleges than in general further education colleges.
15. Students in the schools and colleges visited generally enjoyed their business courses and found them motivating. They saw them as relevant and of direct practical value in future employment or self-employment. This was reflected in the high proportion of students who continued from GCE AS to A2 and the good take-up of business-related courses in higher education. Despite this generally high level of satisfaction, the students frequently complained that their courses did not include sufficient direct contact with businesses and that 'hands on' experience, for example through running mini enterprises, was insufficient. Even on applied courses, the lack of contact with businesses remained a weakness, particularly at GCSE level. Too often, students resorted to downloading information from company websites, which severely limited their opportunities to probe and investigate real issues. This was not the case in the following example.

Students taking GCE A-level applied business visited a local vineyard and were introduced to a number of issues which the business faced. These included ensuring that sufficient labour was available at short notice when the grapes needed picking and problems in production caused by the vagaries of the weather. Students discussed these with the owner and were set the task of coming up with a plan for diversifying the business.

They worked on this task as part of an assessed assignment and presented their findings to the vineyard management. They were able to use the comments they received as part of their evaluation of their ideas. The quality of the work seen was generally very good. In a later lesson on production, the teacher illustrated points by drawing on some of the problems that had been raised at the vineyard. Students responded well to these because they saw them as realistic.

16. Teachers in the schools surveyed generally had good subject knowledge and an appropriate economics, or business-related qualification. The use of non-specialists to teach examination courses in business has reduced substantially over the past 10 years. The quality of newly qualified business education teachers was high and many of them were able to draw on their experience of working in business before coming into teaching. The schools without sixth forms tended to experience the most difficulty in recruiting good-quality business education teachers. Schools and colleges that had forged close links with initial teacher training providers for business education often found it easier to attract and retain high-calibre teachers.
17. Lessons in the schools were generally well planned, had clear learning objectives and were carefully structured to provide a range of activities. The best lessons actively engaged learners through case studies of real businesses, role play, games and simulations. They drew on learners' own experiences, used a range of interesting and up-to-date resources and involved challenging and stimulating tasks. These teachers took risks: they broke away from the traditional approach of explaining a concept first and then getting learners to apply it, as in this lesson.

An introductory lesson in personal finance education started with an advertisement for a new car. This immediately grabbed students' interest. The advertisement contained such terms as 'APR', '0% finance' and '30% deposit'. The teacher explored students' prior knowledge and understanding of these terms and provided explanations where necessary. The teacher asked them if they thought the car represented a good deal and what additional information they would need to make a decision. They were then set the task of researching on the internet the cost of purchasing a range of similar cars. They had to present their findings and argue the case for what they regarded as the 'best buy', using different methods of purchase. The lesson was highly effective because it maintained students' interest and engaged them actively in tasks they saw as realistic.

18. The most effective teachers encouraged students to take responsibility for their own learning, for example by asking them to research topics and present their findings to the class. One sixth form college allocated an hour each week to a student's presentation of an item from the news; the student then had to lead a discussion on the underpinning economic and business ideas. Good teaching

also involved skilful questioning, probing students' responses to check their understanding and challenging them to think more deeply, as in this example.

In a Year 10 lesson on types of business organisation, the teacher used a range of techniques to assess and develop students' understanding of the topic. These started with open-ended questions such as, 'Why do you think many solicitors are organised as partnerships?' and questions that encouraged students to explain their thinking further, for example, 'What do you understand by limited liability?' The teacher then divided the class into four teams to research and devise five questions on business ownership to ask the other teams in a competitive quiz. The teacher acted as adjudicator, awarding points for both the quality of the questions and the responses. At other points in the lesson, all the students were required to indicate their responses to objective test questions by holding up cards, thereby indicating quickly to the teacher the areas where the students lacked basic factual understanding.

19. Characteristics of the weaker lessons included too much talk by teachers, closed questions and over-dependence on worksheets, so that learners were passive. The teachers in these lessons often had little idea about whether students really understood what was being taught. They often ignored apparently incorrect responses to oral questions until a student gave what the teacher regarded as the correct answer. The lesson then moved on without any exploration of why students had given different answers and how many others might have given 'right' or 'wrong' responses.
20. Many of the business education classes surveyed at Key Stage 4 included students with varying levels of prior attainment. Despite this, inspectors saw relatively few lessons in which teachers set tasks which took account of the full range of students' needs. A similar weakness was apparent in post-16 classes where teachers often failed to take sufficient account of students' prior experience of business education. GCE A-level classes frequently contained both students who had taken business courses before and those new to the subject. Students who had taken GCSE business courses had developed a basic understanding of many of the topics covered at GCE A level but teachers rarely acknowledged and built on this. This was not the case in the following example.

In a GCE A-level lesson introducing break-even analysis, the teacher presented a set of tasks. The students who were confident in their understanding worked on them straightaway. The rest of the class, which included students who were new to the subject as well as some of those who had taken GCSE business, were taught the basic concepts they required. Students who successfully completed the simpler exercises were then given more challenging tasks. The teacher provided support as and when it was needed and students who already understood the basics of break-even analysis were not held back.

21. The use of information and communication technology to support and enhance teaching and learning was good in around eight in 10 of the schools visited and three quarters of the colleges inspected since 2005. This improvement from 2004 was due to better access to information and communication technology and the greater competency of teachers and students in using it. Students used information and communication technology effectively for word-processing, research and presentations. Using it for modelling solutions and testing hypotheses continued to be less well developed. Good use was made of educational websites and resources on school and college intranets to support learning. Effective use of virtual learning environments was becoming increasingly common in the colleges in the survey. The increased availability of data projectors connected to the internet did much to enhance and enliven teaching, as the following example illustrates.

A teacher in a sixth form college made excellent use of the BBC news website in a GCE A-level business studies lesson. The closure of a local factory had just been featured on the regional news and the teacher was able to access the news item and use it as a stimulus for a series of questions for discussion. The teacher was also able to access archive material and data through the internet to help students explore issues related to employment and redundancy. The lesson had been planned at the last moment to make the most of an opportunity that presented itself and its effectiveness was increased because it was based on an issue that the students saw as being current and highly relevant.

22. While good progress had been made in developing the use of information and communication technology, some weaknesses remained. Access to computers during business lessons was poor in about one in 10 of the schools visited and in around a quarter of the colleges inspected since 2005. Students sometimes spent too long searching the internet and too much time copying down information from websites without any critical evaluation of their content.
23. Students taking applied and vocational business courses frequently spent a substantial amount of their lesson time working on assessed assignments. At its best, this encouraged independent learning and enabled students to progress at different rates. However, too often it led to a slow pace of work because tight deadlines were not set frequently enough and students went for too long without teachers checking on their progress. This lack of interaction meant that, while students often demonstrated that they had met the assessment criteria, their ideas were not sufficiently challenged and their thinking was not fully extended.
24. The quality of marking and other forms of assessment was generally good in examination courses. The students in the survey received good feedback on their progress and understood what they needed to do to improve. Those on applied and vocational courses in particular had a good understanding of the criteria used to assess their assignments and were clear about what was

required to achieve a particular grade. The assessment of long assignments was most effective when the work was broken down into manageable units; as a result, the students received frequent feedback on their progress. Ofsted's survey of good practice in business, administration and law in colleges identified high-quality assessment and good support as key factors in helping students to achieve well.² Students particularly appreciated individual discussions about their work with teachers. 'Drop in' sessions and 'surgeries' to help students encountering difficulties featured frequently in the successful departments. Students were also very well prepared for examinations; extra classes often provided additional support.

Curriculum provision

25. Very wide variation existed in the provision of business education examination courses in schools, particularly at Key Stage 4. In 2007, around 16% of students nationally took a GCSE in business studies or applied business at Key Stage 4. In some of the business and enterprise specialist schools visited, all students in Years 10 and 11 took a business-related examination course. At the other extreme, around one in 20 of the schools surveyed did not offer any examination course in business at Key Stage 4. Substantially more boys than girls took business courses; for example, in 2006/07, GCSE business studies was taken by 46,200 boys and 32,100 girls.
26. Business-related courses were popular at post-16 level, with around one in five students in the schools visited taking them. Examination entries for 2007 showed that take-up by boys was substantially higher than by girls, with the gap between the genders increasing over the period since 2004. The growing popularity of courses such as health and social care, psychology and media studies among girls and the perception that business is a boys' subject were the reasons most frequently given for this trend.
27. The past 20 years have seen a substantial increase in the number of learners taking GCE A-level business studies and a decline in the number taking economics. However, data for 2004–07 show a small increase in students taking GCE A-level economics.
28. The colleges and schools in the survey with large sixth forms frequently provided more than one level 3 course in business education. These included, for example, GCE A-level business studies, economics and applied business or the National Diploma in business. In choosing between applied/vocational courses and 'academic' courses, students generally identified the type of assessment involved, rather than the course content or method of learning, as the key determining factor. The students in the survey often said that they

² *Identifying good practice: a survey of business, administration and law in colleges (070026)*, Ofsted, 2008.

chose applied/vocational business because they did not cope well with examinations and preferred to be assessed mainly through coursework. Part B of this report explores further some of the issues this raises about the comparability of courses.

29. Students often also said that they took business courses because they saw them as being relevant to future employment or self-employment, but they frequently complained that they had too few opportunities to engage directly with businesses and employers. They were also disappointed that they could not make more use in their assessed work of the experiences they gained through part-time employment or taking part in activities such as Young Enterprise. The following illustrates very effective business links developed by a school department.

All units in the National Certificate level 2 course in business (taught in Key Stage 4) and the GCE A-level applied business course were linked to a visit or other contact with business. For example, customer care was linked to a visit to a theme park, production was linked to a visit to a brewery, and recruitment and selection involved discussions with a local human resources manager. In the sixth form, business students organised events and visits for other students. The work involved planning, costing, running and evaluating the activities and contributed directly to a unit of work on enterprise. Learners found these experiences motivating because they helped to 'bring the subject alive' and provided contexts that the learners could relate to.

30. The most effective departments in the schools and colleges provided their business students with a great deal more than just examination courses. Examples of activities that enriched the business curriculum included visits, residential field trips, visiting speakers, business clubs and participation in business competitions. Learners saw these activities as adding greatly to their enjoyment and enthusiasm for the subject, as well as supporting their learning. The following example of particularly effective extra-curricular provision is taken from Ofsted's survey of good practice in colleges.

All learners on the college's business courses were encouraged to sign up for the 'business academy'. Those who did participated one afternoon a week in an extensive range of relevant activities which included listening to visiting speakers from industry and higher education, debates, problem-solving, team building and business enterprise competitions. The programme of activities had a strong focus on developing learners' presentation and leadership skills. Learners enjoyed participating in the academy and all gained accreditation through the Institute of Leadership and Management award.

Developing economic and business understanding for all learners

31. The provision of economic and business understanding for all learners, as part of the statutory requirement for work-related learning at Key Stage 4, remained very patchy in the schools visited. While recent government initiatives have done much to raise the profile of enterprise education in schools, the emphasis has been mainly on developing the skills needed for enterprise capability, rather than promoting economic and business understanding and financial capability. Less than half the schools visited had explicit programmes to develop aspects of economic and business understanding. Even where programmes existed, they were rarely comprehensive and learning outcomes were often not identified or assessed. The reasons for the failure to develop economic and business education effectively in many of the schools visited are explored further in part B of this report.

Leadership and management

32. Evidence from institutional inspections in 2004/05 indicated that leadership and management in business education were good or better in around three quarters of schools and inadequate in about one in 20.³ Evidence from the sample visited during 2004/07 indicated that they were good or better in about seven in 10 schools and inadequate in fewer than one in 20.
33. Institutional inspections of colleges in 2004/05 indicated that leadership and management of business education were good or better in around six out of 10 colleges and inadequate in just over one in 20. Leadership and management were better in sixth form colleges than in colleges of general further education. Inspections of colleges since 2004/05 showed leadership and management to be generally improving where provision for business education had previously been judged as satisfactory or inadequate.
34. Departmental self-evaluation has generally been well established in colleges but has been developed less strongly in schools. However, the evidence from the sample of schools visited most recently indicated that business departments had strengthened their self-evaluation and it was good in around three quarters of them. The large majority of business education departments in schools have traditionally undertaken some analysis of examination results but this was becoming more sophisticated. The departments in the survey evaluated themselves against a wider range of criteria, such as the quality of teaching and learning, the curriculum, and leadership and management. Increasingly, departments considered their contribution to learners' personal development and the Every Child Matters outcomes. Departments whose self-evaluation was weaker gave insufficient attention to evaluating the achievement and progress made by different groups of learners, for example the comparative performance

³ From September 2005, school inspection did not include the inspection of separate subjects. The last academic year for which these data are available is 2004/05.

of boys and girls, students with learning difficulties or students from minority ethnic groups. These departments also lacked a rigorous evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching, including taking account of the learners' views.

35. In the schools and colleges with good departmental leadership and management, highly effective systems monitored and tracked learners' progress and the departments could intervene early where learners were falling behind with their work or underachieving. These departments also set learners challenging targets and regularly reviewed progress towards them, as in this sixth form college.

Learners were given two target examination grades when they started the course. They would be expected to achieve the first target grade if they made normal progress in relation to their prior attainment. The second grade was an aspirational target, based on what they might expect to achieve if their progress was good or better. Learners received feedback every six weeks on how well they were doing in relation to their targets. Individual discussions were held with all learners about their progress and what they could do to improve it. Targets were adjusted upwards if learners were meeting them consistently; those not making sufficient progress were offered additional support.

36. The most effective departments in the schools and colleges had well-established programmes for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning through classroom observations. The best practice included joint observations between the head of department and a senior manager in order to moderate judgements and compare them across subjects. Observations also had a particular focus on an aspect of teaching and learning that the department was trying to improve, for example the extent to which learners were actively engaged in learning or how effectively teachers questioned learners.
37. Of the schools visited, only about half the business education departments had a vision for the subject that extended beyond examination courses to include developing all students' economic and business understanding and financial capability. This is part of the statutory requirement for work-related learning at Key Stage 4. These aspects of the curriculum were frequently seen as the responsibility of others, such as the head of personal, social and health education or citizenship education. Heads of business education departments were frequently unaware of the aspects and quality of economics and business education being taught outside their own departments. The business and enterprise schools in the survey tended to have a more coherent view of the subject that embraced the broader provision for all students. However, even in these schools, it was not uncommon to find the business education department focused exclusively on examination provision and isolated from the subject's wider development.

Professional development

38. Twenty of the survey visits during 2005/07 included a specific focus on the professional development of business education teachers; this was also reported on more generally in other visits. In the visits that evaluated professional development in detail, it was good in just over half the schools and satisfactory in the rest. Wider evidence indicated that the quality of provision for subject-specific professional development varied considerably. It was often weakest in schools with very small business education departments and where there was a lack of opportunity for business teachers to network with those in other schools and colleges. Much of the externally provided professional development focused on examination requirements. Although teachers found this helpful, they often lacked subject-specific support to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
39. The Government's initiative to promote enterprise education has resulted in teachers' greater awareness of what it is and the skills it is meant to develop through all subjects. However, few teachers in the schools visited had received support in developing economic and business understanding for all students. Ofsted's report on personal finance education also found considerable variation in the quality of professional development and, often, a lack of awareness of the support available for teachers involved in financial education.⁴
40. Evidence from the colleges inspected since 2005 indicated that professional development had improved and was at least satisfactory. In the colleges visited for the survey of good practice, staff development was a major strength. There was a very strong focus on improving teaching and learning and staff were encouraged to attend courses to keep up-to-date with subject developments. The teacher training provision in the general further education colleges was often an important source of support for part-time teachers who had come into teaching from business backgrounds but without formal teaching qualifications. Often, however, there were insufficient opportunities for staff to update their professional skills and gain industrial experience. Managers often noted to inspectors that good professional development had been instrumental in recruiting and retaining high-quality staff, and keeping their knowledge up-to-date was a major factor in achieving high standards.

Initial teacher training in business education

41. During 2005–07, there were 19 inspections of initial teacher training for business education in secondary schools. These included school-centred initial

⁴ *Developing financially capable young people: A survey of good practice in personal finance education for 11–18-year-olds in schools and colleges* (070029), Ofsted, 2008. The Personal Finance Education Group quality assures resources and provides free support for schools and colleges www.pfeg.org

teacher training providers as well as higher education institutions. The inspections found a steady improvement in the quality of training, which was good or better in nearly all the providers.

42. The trainee teachers surveyed generally had good subject knowledge. This resulted from the providers' effective selection processes and the careful auditing of trainees' knowledge and skills, enabling areas of relative weakness to be improved. Effective training by school-based mentors and university tutors helped the trainees to develop good classroom skills and encouraged them to develop exciting and interesting lessons. The trainees' placements enabled many to receive a balanced experience of teaching business education across the 14–19 age range. Trainees generally had a good understanding of how to prepare students for examinations and guide their coursework. Many of the trainees had very good information and communication technology skills that they were able to use to support teaching and learning. They were also able to use real examples from their previous experience of working in business to make lessons more relevant.
43. All the providers inspected had generally adapted well to meeting the changing demands of business education. Most of the trainees had a good understanding of the requirements of GCSE and GCE A-level courses but their knowledge and experience of applied and vocational courses were sometimes less well developed. The larger providers had well-structured courses that included developing enterprise education, economic and business understanding, and financial capability for all Key Stage 4 students. There were also examples of trainees planning and running enterprise days for schools. University-based tutors maintained an up-to-date knowledge of developments and emerging issues in business education through national networks, but this was less true of the smaller school-centred initial teacher training providers. This was reflected in their trainees' weaker knowledge and understanding of broader developments in the subject.

Part B: Current issues in business education

Developing economic and business understanding for all students in secondary schools

44. Attempts by governments over the past 25 years to develop economic and business understanding for all students through a series of initiatives and curriculum developments have met with mixed success; students' understanding of basic economic and business ideas generally remains weak.
45. There are powerful arguments for all students to have a basic understanding of economics and business to help them develop a critical awareness and make decisions as consumers, producers and citizens. Economic forces shape our lives, from determining the price of a cup of coffee to establishing the level of unemployment. Arguably, understanding how markets operate is as important

as having a basic understanding of the laws of physics. Most employment in the economy's private sector is currently in small- and medium-sized businesses and this is set to increase further, as is self-employment. Understanding how businesses function and the economic environment in which they work is therefore becoming increasingly important. A basic understanding of how the economy operates is an essential part of becoming an effective citizen, as Dr Andrew Wardlow, then Secretary of the Bank of England, said in his commentary in Ofsted's report on citizenship:

'The economy is a key part of all our daily lives, young and old. It can have a marked impact on the opportunities we have, the uncertainties and risks we face, and our standard of living in general... I believe that teaching young people about the economy as part of citizenship education will help them to understand a key aspect of the way our society works, how we each contribute, and how it affects our everyday lives.'⁵

46. There has been no lack of well-funded initiatives to support the development of economic and business understanding for young people. In the 1980s, for example, the Government included the development of economic awareness for all pupils as part of its Technical and Vocational Education Initiative, and economic and industrial understanding became one of the five cross-curricular themes in the National Curriculum. While these initiatives had some early success, evidence from inspection showed that, in the large majority of schools, their impact was not sustained, and schools failed to embed economic and business understanding in the curriculum.
47. The programmes of study for citizenship education, introduced into the secondary curriculum in 2002, include students knowing about 'how the economy functions, including the role of business and financial services'. In 2005, work-related learning became a statutory requirement for all 14–16-year-olds. The non-statutory framework for work-related learning suggests that students should 'learn about the way business enterprises operate and be able to demonstrate a basic knowledge and understanding of a range of economic concepts'. The Government's enterprise education initiative, introduced nationally at Key Stage 4 in 2005, sees economic and business understanding as one of the elements supporting the development of enterprise capability.
48. Despite this support, Ofsted's survey inspections show that economic and business understanding remains the least well developed aspect of work-related learning. Ofsted's report on citizenship also found that:

"Public services and how they are financed" in Key Stage 3 and "how the economy functions, including the role of business and financial services" in Key Stage 4 are frequently overlooked and often misunderstood, with

⁵ *Towards consensus? Citizenship in secondary schools* (HMI 2666), Ofsted, 2006.

references to personal rather than public finance; in general, they do not receive, even remotely, the depth of treatment that they are due in citizenship courses.'

49. In July 2007 the Government announced that a new non-statutory programme of study for economic well-being and financial capability would be introduced in the curriculum for all students in Key Stages 3 and 4 from September 2008. The programme of study is intended to bring together careers education, work-related learning, enterprise and financial education. It sits within the non-statutory subject of personal, social, health and economic education and is seen as making an important contribution to the Every Child Matters outcomes. Among other requirements, students are expected to be able to understand and apply economic ideas and to be able to manage money.
50. Given the range and weight of initiatives to establish economic and business understanding in the curriculum, it is reasonable to ask why, largely, they failed and whether the most recent curriculum developments will be any more successful. Ofsted's evidence identifies a number of interrelated factors that explain the lack of success in the past. While headteachers regard developing economic and business understanding as important, it is rarely seen as a high priority. The statutory requirement to develop economic and business understanding is ambiguous. Work-related learning at Key Stage 4 is statutory but the programmes of study are not. Most headteachers do not see improving students' economic and business understanding as contributing directly to raising their achievement in examinations.
51. Competing pressures on the curriculum have meant that economic and business understanding is rarely afforded discrete lesson time. The initiatives in the 1980s and 1990s encouraged a cross-curricular approach to developing economic and business understanding, aimed at embedding it in all subjects. This approach proved very difficult to manage and was rarely sustained. It required a great deal of professional development for teachers who, understandably, did not always see it as a priority within their own subjects. Many schools carried out audits that identified where economic and business understanding occurred in the curriculum: for example, students taking history might study hyperinflation in Germany in the 1920s and those taking geography might consider the factors contributing to economic development. However, this often resulted in students gaining a very piecemeal understanding, depending on their subject options. Frequently, they also failed to develop an understanding of the underpinning economic concepts because they were not explored in sufficient depth or applied to more than one context. The audits were useful insofar as they identified possible provision but they often revealed little or nothing about what economic understanding students were actually gaining.
52. The difficulties of managing a cross-curricular approach resulted in many schools developing units of work that covered aspects of economic and

business understanding within personal, social and health education and in citizenship. The quality of this work varied considerably, depending on the knowledge and expertise of the teachers involved. Too often, those with a poor understanding of economics and business presented a biased view, based on their personal experiences, or failed to explore alternative solutions to economic and business problems. In lessons, teachers' over-dependency on using worksheets meant that students lost interest and saw economics as boring. Not all secondary schools have specialist teachers of economics and business and, where they do, these teachers are not always involved in developing economic and business understanding beyond examination courses. This was the case in about half the schools visited in the sample. In some of them, this was because the specialist teachers were fully committed to examination classes and were often involved in teaching information and communication technology as well as business education. In others, it was because the development of economic and business understanding was seen as the responsibility of the coordinators for personal, social and health education or citizenship education. In these schools, it was frequently the case that subject leaders for business education did not know what economic and business understanding was being taught outside their own departments.

53. Common weaknesses, even in the schools which made reasonable provision for economic and business understanding, included a failure to identify students' expected learning outcomes and a lack of assessment of their progress. Only a small minority of the schools in the survey had a clear idea of their effectiveness in developing economic and business understanding and what knowledge and skills their students had gained by the end of Key Stage 4. These shortcomings were also identified in Ofsted's recent survey of personal finance education.⁶
54. The success of developing economic and business understanding in the future through the new curriculum area of personal, social, health and economic education will depend, to a large extent, on how well the lessons learned from the past are taken into account. Schools have the freedom to decide how this aspect of the curriculum is organised and managed. However, Ofsted's evidence shows it has little chance of success if headteachers and other senior managers do not see it as being an important part of all students' personal development and future economic well-being. The evidence also suggests that it requires adequate and discrete curriculum time. While other subjects may well contribute to developing students' economic and business understanding, the overwhelming evidence is that a cross-curricular approach is rarely effective on its own. Developing economic and business understanding requires teachers with the appropriate subject expertise and classroom skills. They also need to

⁶ *Developing financially capable young people: A survey of good practice in personal finance education for 11–18-year-olds in schools and colleges (070029)*, Ofsted, 2008.

be clear about the learning outcomes they want students to achieve and to have robust systems to assess their progress. The intention to develop economic and business understanding at Key Stage 3 will be particularly challenging: most schools have little previous experience of this and fewer resources are available to support learning than at Key Stage 4.

The diversity of business qualifications and forms of assessment

55. Schools and colleges provide a plethora of qualifications in business for 14–19-year-olds. This reflects the subject's diverse nature, ranging from the academic study of economics and business to practical administrative skills. In addition, qualifications often provide a very wide choice of options: for example, one level 3 National Award requires students to study four core modules and then to select two out of a list of over 30 units, ranging from accountancy to employment law. The way in which students are assessed also varies a great deal, particularly in terms of the balance between internal and external assessment. At one extreme, GCE A-level courses are available that are assessed totally through external examinations. At the other, there are level 3 National Award courses that are assessed almost entirely through internally marked coursework assignments. All these factors result in students obtaining qualifications in business that are recognised nationally as being equivalent but which are often arrived at through very different routes. The visits to schools during the survey investigated whether this mattered.
56. Quite frequently, the schools with large business education departments provided both academic and applied or vocational business courses at GCSE or GCE A level. In these schools, the reason students most frequently gave for their choice of course was the type of assessment it involved. Students who disliked examinations chose mainly applied or vocational courses, while those who disliked coursework tended to choose courses which might be termed more academic. GCE A-level economics was seen as being more academically demanding than business studies and attracted higher attaining students. GCSE applied business (equivalent to two GCSEs) tended to attract lower attaining students when it was provided as a double option but attracted higher attaining students when it was available as a single option, as students and their parents saw it as 'getting two GCSEs for the price of one'.
57. The students interviewed during the survey rarely cited the course content or learning styles as reasons for choosing between applied and 'academic' business courses. This perhaps casts some doubt on the need for both types of qualifications. Most teachers of business interviewed agreed that all students should acquire a knowledge of business vocabulary and an understanding of key concepts. Most also agreed that students should be able to apply their knowledge to real situations, analyse information and evaluate alternative solutions to problems. There is a strong case to be made, too, for students to develop and demonstrate a range of skills through their business courses that they will need in future employment, such as being able to use information and

communication technology effectively and being able to apply their numeracy and communications skills to business contexts. This is not an argument for either applied or 'academic' courses but, rather, one in favour of combining the best elements of each.

The coursework debate

58. Much debate, as in other subjects, surrounds the need for coursework in business qualifications. The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority has ruled that, from September 2009, there will no longer be any coursework that is set and marked by teachers in GCSE and GCE A-level economics and business studies. The intention is to replace coursework with what are termed controlled assignments. This contrasts sharply with applied GCSE and GCE A-level courses and with National Awards where internally marked coursework assignments will continue to be the main form of assessment for the foreseeable future.
59. There are strong arguments in favour of coursework in business courses. It provides opportunities to assess learners' skills in areas where these skills are not easy to demonstrate under examination conditions. These might include, for example, investigating an issue in a local business, carrying out research and making an oral presentation. Inspectors saw some excellent coursework during visits to schools and colleges, such as the following.

Students taking GCE A-level applied business visited a traditional independent brewery. One of its directors set the students a range of problems currently facing it. These included declining sales of beer, a possible relocation of the brewery and the threat of redundancies. The students investigated these problems using a range of sources, including email contact with the director and other personnel at the brewery. They worked in groups but produced individual assignments. Each group presented its ideas to the brewery in the form of a consultancy report and a verbal presentation. The students received feedback on their ideas and presentations that they were then able to include as part of their evaluations. The assignment was effective because it was sharply focused and realistic in terms of the demands it placed on the students.

60. However, much of the coursework seen during the survey was of mediocre quality. It did little to demonstrate skills that could not be assessed in other ways. It was often dominated by description with very little analysis or evaluation of the information collected. For example, students taking the GCSE applied business course are required to investigate two contrasting businesses. The intention is for students to have direct contact with the businesses but, practically, many found this difficult and resorted to downloading information from company websites, often with little evaluation of the material. Some simply repeated the aims of the companies they were studying with no comment on their validity. Elsewhere, students copied out descriptions of different types of business organisations with little reference to the companies

being investigated. Rather worryingly, some of this work was awarded high marks.

61. Weaknesses in coursework sometimes stemmed from unrealistic tasks. This often occurred when students were asked to carry out consumer surveys. While there is clearly merit in learners designing their own market research questionnaires, they frequently used samples that were too small to be meaningful or useful. Typically, students ended up asking their friends and relatives or inventing the results. Better work often occurred when students combined their individual data or used information from existing market research.
62. Students frequently found evaluation in their coursework to be a problem. This was sometimes because what they were being asked to evaluate was too difficult. For example, younger students were asked to evaluate business strategy when they did not yet have sufficient knowledge and skills to do this. In other cases, students found it very difficult to obtain evidence to support their evaluations. This meant they resorted to giving opinions that were either unsupported by evidence or that used evidence that was invented.
63. The marking and assessment of coursework gives rise to some concerns. The assessment criteria sometimes led teachers to adopt a 'tick box' approach to marking, awarding marks or grades where the evidence met the criteria but ignoring other evidence that showed misunderstanding and muddled thinking. For example, one student gained credit for being able to name different types of business organisation and give examples, even though he clearly demonstrated that he did not understand the difference between a public limited company and a state-owned enterprise.
64. Inspectors' discussions with students who were assessed almost entirely through coursework frequently revealed students' weak or partial understanding of business concepts, which was not always reflected in their coursework grades. The lack of an examination often meant that they were not required to learn and retain their understanding. They also had difficulty in applying to different or unfamiliar contexts the understanding they had gained from investigating a specific example. Some qualifications allow students to re-submit coursework and it was clear that students often received considerable help from their teachers in achieving higher marks and grades. Students often learnt more through this process but it is difficult to equate this to assessments that are carried out under controlled conditions and without the support of a teacher.
65. These concerns should not result in the demise of coursework as a form of assessment in business education. However, students taking courses that are assessed primarily through coursework should demonstrate levels of knowledge and understanding that are commensurate with those assessed through examinations. This requires a rigorous moderation procedure, perhaps

involving interviews with students to test their understanding and the authenticity of their work. There is also a strong argument for having some assessment in all courses carried out under controlled conditions to test students' synoptic knowledge and understanding. An equally strong argument exists in favour of all students being able to demonstrate their capability in the full range of business skills that are not necessarily best assessed through examinations.

The impact of the business and enterprise specialism

66. The number of schools that have business and enterprise either as a first or second specialism has increased rapidly from 22 in September 2002 to 271 in September 2007. In addition to business subjects, the schools have a particular focus on mathematics and information and communication technology. As with other specialist schools, the business and enterprise specialism is meant to raise standards and achievement across the whole school.
67. Of the 181 business and enterprise schools that had institutional inspections between September 2005 and December 2007, 119 of them had been specialist schools for two or more years. Of these 119 schools, 57% were judged good or better for overall effectiveness compared with 62% of all specialist schools (see Figure 1).

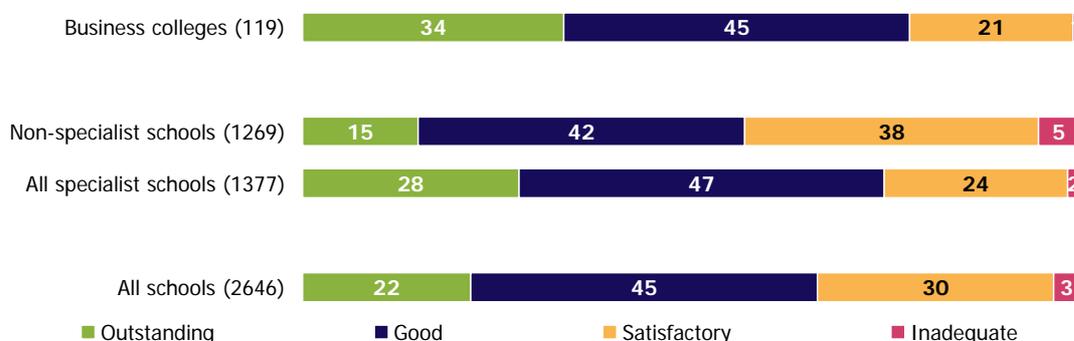
Figure 1. Overall effectiveness of specialist colleges that have been operational for at least two years (percentage of schools inspected between September 2005 and December 2007)



Percentages are rounded and may not add exactly to 100.

68. Achievement and standards and teaching and learning in business and enterprise schools were also slightly less effective compared to all specialist schools. The specialism, as might be expected, appeared to have had the greatest impact on the development of workplace and other skills that contribute to students' future economic well-being, where 79% were judged good or better compared with 67% of all schools (see Figure 2).

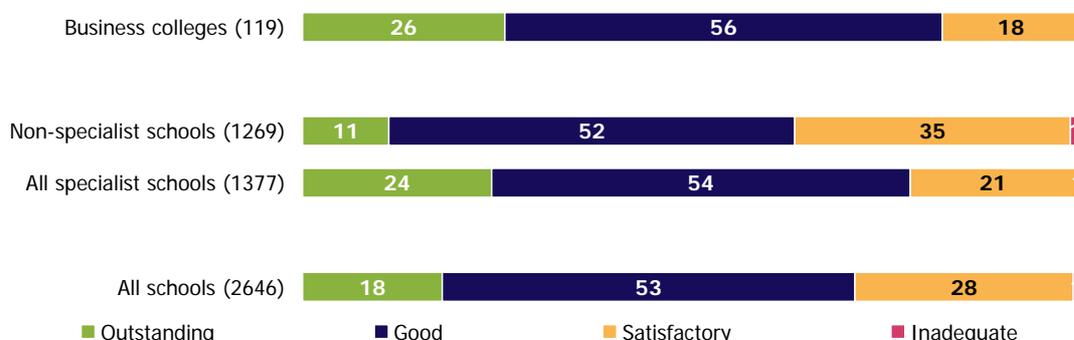
Figure 2. How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being in specialist colleges that have been operational for at least two years (percentage of schools inspected between September 2005 and December 2007)



Percentages are rounded and may not add exactly to 100.

69. However, the quality of the curriculum was also more effective in the business and enterprise schools than in all specialist schools (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners in specialist colleges that have been operational for at least two years (percentage of schools inspected between September 2005 and December 2007)



Percentages are rounded and may not add exactly to 100.

70. Visits were made to 15 business and enterprise schools, including three special schools, during 2005–07 as part of Ofsted’s survey programme of business education. Achievement was judged to be good or better in 10 of these schools. Some of them had only recently become business and enterprise schools when they were visited, so it was still early for the specialism to have had an impact.

71. The specialism made an important contribution to improving the quality of the business education curriculum, including the wider provision of economic and business understanding for all students, which was a strength in all but one of the 15 schools visited. The specialist business and enterprise colleges often provided a wider choice of business courses at Key Stage 4 and post-16 than

was the case in other schools. Enterprise education for all students, including financial capability and economic and business understanding, was also well developed in nearly all the schools. There was a good understanding across these schools of enterprise education and it often permeated a range of subjects. In 10 of the schools, links with local employers were a particular strength. The specialism had enabled six schools to allocate more staffing to promoting these links.

72. However, the quality of teaching and learning was similar in the 15 specialist business and enterprise schools to that of the other schools in the sample. Nearly all the schools visited in the survey used information and communication technology effectively to support teaching and learning, often as a result of the enhanced resources from the specialist status. Three of the schools felt the specialism had been an important factor in attracting and retaining well-qualified business education teachers. There was little evidence, however, that the specialism had a major impact on improving teaching methodology in business subjects. Paradoxically, enterprise education was sometimes having a greater impact on teaching and learning in subjects other than business because the specialism focused on developing more enterprising teaching. For example, it encouraged students to be actively involved in their learning and gave them more opportunities to use initiative.
73. Inspectors saw some excellent work in the three special schools where the business and enterprise curriculum was closely tailored to students' individual needs. There was a very strong focus on practical activities, and the flexibility of the curriculum meant that it was possible to develop some high-quality links with local businesses. The schools saw enterprise education very much as a way of helping their students to gain confidence and develop their independence. Activities were often linked to the Every Child Matters outcomes. For example, a project on healthy eating in one of the schools involved a group of students investigating the availability of Fair Trade fruit in a local supermarket and selling Fair Trade bananas at break-times. This included organising a marketing campaign based on encouraging their peers to eat healthily. Another school linked its rewards system to a project to encourage students to save and spend wisely. Students earned stamps with a monetary value for good behaviour, achievement and effort that could be saved to purchase goods as Christmas presents for their families and friends. The project was very effective in encouraging students to think carefully about saving and spending decisions as well as providing a major incentive for good behaviour and effort.
74. Inspectors' discussions with headteachers during the survey revealed that the most frequent reasons for choosing the business and enterprise specialism were that it was seen as being applicable to all subjects and a way of raising standards by making teaching more innovative and relevant. This was reflected

in the most effective business and enterprise schools: the specialism permeated all aspects of the school's work, as in this example.

All subjects included business and enterprise topics and activities in their programmes of study for all year groups. For example, ethical issues to do with business were considered in religious education, the language used in advertising was part of the English course and students in design and technology made, marketed and sold items in their summer fair. Teachers were encouraged to develop more enterprising approaches to teaching and learning by bidding into a fund to support their ideas. Bids had to include developments that were expected to raise achievement and also required ways of evaluating the impact of the initiative. The science department, for instance, used additional funding to develop a set of resources based on local businesses to help make the subject more relevant and interesting to students.

Students could also bid for funds to support enterprising projects. These included setting up and running a range of after-school clubs, a project to improve the school environment and the development of a student advice centre. To support their bids, students were required to present a detailed business plan, including start-up and running costs, to a senior member of staff.

75. Business and enterprise schools play an important role in disseminating good practice in enterprise education to other schools through the Schools' Enterprise Education Network. This is funded by the Government and managed by the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust. It links all secondary schools to a business and enterprise specialist 'hub' or 'spoke' school. These schools organise training events and provide support and advice, and opportunities for teachers from other schools to visit them. Business and enterprise schools have also undertaken some very exciting and well-received work with their contributing primary schools.
76. There are many examples of highly innovative work in business and enterprise schools. There is clear evidence of the specialism leading to improvements in the curriculum and some evidence that it helps to make learning more active and relevant. However, its impact on raising standards and achievement in the specialist subjects and more generally is not yet secure.

Notes

The report draws on evidence from Ofsted's institutional inspections of schools, colleges and initial teacher training and from subject-specific survey visits by Her Majesty's Inspectors to 118 secondary schools, including 15 specialist business and enterprise schools and three special schools, between April 2004 and December 2007. The schools for the survey visits were selected to represent a geographical spread of different types of schools.

Inspectors evaluated achievement and standards, teaching and learning, curriculum provision, leadership and management of business education departments and inclusion. They also focused on provision for developing economic and business understanding and financial capability for all students. Inspectors observed lessons, held discussions with groups of students and staff, scrutinised students' written work, analysed data and reviewed departmental documentation. In 20 of the schools inspected during 2006/07, inspectors considered in detail the subject-specific support for the professional development of business education teachers.

Institutional inspections of schools and colleges provided evidence on business education nationally up to September 2005. However, subjects have not been inspected in school inspections since the introduction of the new framework for inspection in September 2005. Since that date, college inspections have inspected business education only in the 43 colleges that had been judged overall as satisfactory or inadequate in their previous inspection. Evidence on initial teacher training in business education was drawn from 19 providers inspected during 2005–07.

Additional evidence was drawn from Ofsted's survey visits to look at good practice in business, administration and law in colleges and of personal financial education for 14–19-year-olds during 2006/07.

Further information

Publications

Developing enterprising young people (HMI 2460), Ofsted, 2005.

Identifying good practice: A survey of business, administration and law in colleges (070026), Ofsted, 2008.

Developing financially capable young people: A survey of good practice in personal finance education for 11–18-year-olds in schools and colleges (070029), Ofsted, 2008.

Websites

The BBC news website is an excellent source of information for business and economics education; <http://news.bbc.co.uk>

Biz/ed is a web-based learning and teaching education resource for teachers and students of business courses. It includes resources, news updates, interactive questions and competitions; www.bized.co.uk

The Department for Children, Schools and Families provides links to a range of information and resources to support teachers at Key Stage 4 and post-16; www.teachernet.gov.uk/teachingandlearning/resourcematerials

The Enterprise Education website provides a summary of national and local developments in enterprise education; www.enterpriseinschools.org.uk

The Economics and Business Education Association is a professional association providing support for teachers in schools and colleges and others involved in economics, business and enterprise education; www.ebea.org.uk/ebea

The Personal Finance Education Group (PFEG) quality assures and provides resources to support personal finance education, including Learning Money Matters, a major programme of advice and professional development for teachers involved in personal finance education; www.pfeg.org

The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority website has information on qualifications and curriculum guidance, including case studies of good practice in work-related learning and enterprise education; www.qca.org.uk

The Quality Improvement Agency website has useful information on innovation and excellence in the post-16 learning and skills sector; www.qia.org.uk

The excellence gateway provides examples of good practice, self-improvement, suppliers of improvement services and materials to support teaching and learning; <http://excellence.qia.org.uk>

The Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (SSAT) website has information on business and enterprise specialist schools and developments in business, financial and enterprise education; www.ssatrust.org.uk

The Times 100 website provides free resources for teachers and students, based on well-known businesses; www.thetimes100.co.uk

Tutor 2 U is a free website providing resources for students and teachers of post-16 courses in economics and business; www.tutor2u.net