

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

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



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Mrs J Cutcliffe
Headteacher
Weston Lullingfields Primary School
Nr Baschurch
Shrewsbury
Shropshire
SY4 2AW

Dear Mrs Cutcliffe

Ofsted 2010–11 subject survey inspection programme: information and communication technology (ICT)

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 15 November 2010 to look at work in ICT.

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 pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; observation of four lessons; and a tour of the school with pupils.

The overall effectiveness of ICT is good.

Achievement

Achievement in ICT is good.

- The number of pupils in each cohort changes considerably from year to year, and is also affected by higher than average inward mobility. This impacts on the overall attainment on entry to the school, which varies annually from in line with national expectations to below national expectations for ICT.
- Pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage are supported well. They confidently use basic technologies such as floor robots, walkie-talkies, headphones and the interactive whiteboard, so that by the time they enter Year 1, they are achieving the expected standard. The progress from Year 1 to Year 6 is good. By the end of Year 6, pupils leave with levels of attainment which are above average overall, especially in presenting information, communication and control.

- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. They are given good support in lessons by well-informed teaching assistants.
- Pupils behave well when using ICT equipment. They are enthusiastic about ICT and by Year 6 they can maturely discuss the opportunities they have to use new technologies in a range of subjects.
- By Year 6, pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe when using new technologies. This is further supported by regular visits by the school's police liaison officer to discuss e-safety with pupils.

Quality of teaching

Teaching of ICT is good.

- Teachers and teaching assistants have good subject knowledge and are confident users of ICT.
- Activities in lessons are generally challenging. Year 6 pupils confirm that they find ICT lessons 'challenging but fun'. Younger pupils also enjoy ICT but the pace of lessons and challenge is not always rigorous because groups using ICT are, at times, too large and this prevents all pupils from becoming involved fully.
- Teachers and teaching assistants use questions well to give immediate feedback and to move pupils forward in their next stage of learning. Year 5 and 6 pupils know the levels they are achieving in ICT and what they need to do to move up a level.
- However, not all teachers share the learning objective and/or success criteria for ICT, so that pupils can be fully involved in assessing their progress within a lesson and over time.
- The relationships between staff and pupils are excellent. Staff have good behaviour management skills and ensure a safe environment in which pupils can learn.

Quality of the curriculum

The ICT curriculum is satisfactory.

- The curriculum ensures that all pupils receive their statutory requirement for ICT. There is a good emphasis on presenting information, communication and control.
- However, the use of data loggers is not planned as systematically. This has been recognised as an area for development and plans are in place to improve this aspect of the ICT as the new curriculum develops.
- Although the Early Years Foundation Stage classroom does not have immediate access to the internet or an interactive whiteboard, this is resolved by the children being able to use these facilities in the main building, at least three times a week.

- Well planned links are being made between ICT, literacy, numeracy and foundation subjects. The school is moving towards an integrated and creative curriculum but this is not yet fully embedded.
- The daily after-school club is very well attended and provides pupils with the opportunity to use ICT to develop their skills, for research or for homework.

Leadership and management of ICT

The leadership and management of ICT are good.

- Being a much smaller than average school, the leader for ICT is also responsible for leading and managing a range of other subjects. However, this has not reduced the focus on ICT, which has a high profile in the school.
- Good links have been made with the local secondary school, which has ICT status, to help develop the curriculum and to provide technical support.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring that the learning objectives and/or success criteria for ICT lessons, or for ICT when supporting other subjects, are shared with pupils, so as to involve them more in self- and peer-evaluation
- embedding and evaluating the use of ICT to support all subjects, as the creative curriculum develops
- improving the curriculum for ICT by developing the use of data logging.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop ICT 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

Anthony Green
Additional Inspector