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12 April 2011

Mrs C Gibson  
Headteacher  
Hadleigh High School  
High Lands Road  
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Dear Mrs Gibson

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

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and students, during my visit on 31 March and 1 April 2011 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 students; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of students' work; and observation of seven lessons, including two observed jointly with members of the senior leadership team.

The overall effectiveness of ICT is outstanding.

**Achievement in ICT**

Achievement in ICT is outstanding.

- Students begin in Year 7 with levels of attainment which are mostly at or a little above the national average. By the end of Year 9, they are achieving above or significantly above national averages and, by the end of Year 11, well above national averages. For example, the pass rate in terms of Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations Nationals and GCSE 'CIDA' are excellent. A significant number of students go on to study GCE A-level computing at college. Across the school, students make at least good progress with a significant majority making outstanding progress. They have a highly developed understanding of ICT concepts which means that they can apply their knowledge and understanding quickly in new areas of learning.

- Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported to achieve well. Those who are gifted and talented are challenged to attain high results.
- Students are supported to learn how to become safe and responsible users of new technologies through assemblies, their personal, social, health and economics education programme and some work in ICT. The impact of this teaching on the students' understanding of e-safety is satisfactory.
- Students' behaviour in lessons is outstanding. They listen to each other and work extremely well together, showing great enjoyment in what they are doing. The relationships between staff and students when using ICT are exemplary.

### **Quality of teaching in ICT**

The quality of teaching in ICT is outstanding.

- Teaching has outstanding features. Its key strength is that it is focused on developing students' understanding and not just their ICT skills. Lesson planning is detailed, often done collaboratively across the department, and is based on a careful prior assessment of what it is the students know, understand and can do. It focuses on teaching what students need to understand in order to obtain a higher grade in their assessment. Students know what level they are working on and what it is they need to do to achieve a level. This is because teachers focus on this clearly in every lesson. Specialist teachers have excellent subject knowledge which makes for challenging questioning and pace in lessons. The 100-minute lessons are expertly divided into sections so that pace is maintained and students remain engaged for the whole period. This is so effective that students often make better progress in the latter part of the lessons; interest rarely wanes. Differentiation by task is excellent.
- Students are supported well in developing their independent learning skills when using ICT through paired, group and independent working. They are thus very confident about using new technologies.
- The assessment of work is excellent. Assessment of learning is outstanding, as is the focus on target-setting and monitoring.

### **Quality of the curriculum in ICT**

The quality of the curriculum in ICT is good.

- The quality of the curriculum is improving. All students receive their entitlement to the statutory ICT National Curriculum and the department is acutely aware of how to fill any gaps in Key Stage 4 created by a particular examination specification. The Key Stage 3 curriculum is kept under continuous review in order to meet the demands of new technologies. The curriculum designed for September 2011 is based on a proper evaluation of what is needed for the students and is designed to fit both their individual needs and to meet the overall aims of the school.

- Information about the ICT curriculum in other subjects has been collected with a view to informing students' overall final assessment in Key Stage 3. However, it is not yet being used in this way. An audit is also planned of staff's ICT subject knowledge linked to a strategy for career and professional development and the introduction of the virtual learning environment (VLE) but this has not yet been implemented.

### **Effectiveness of leadership and management in ICT**

Leadership and management in ICT are outstanding.

- ICT is extremely well led at all levels. Monitoring of the work of the department is regular, accurate and leads to carefully targeted improvements. Self-evaluation is comprehensive, based on a range of evidence and is accurate. It identifies the key changes needed to sustain high performance. The improvement plans are excellent, taking into account a range of sources of evidence, including students' perceptions, and clearly focusing on the impact on their achievement. For example, the school has rightly placed an emphasis on implementing a new VLE to support students' ICT achievement across subjects. Progress has been made over the last three years with a continuous upward trend in achievement.
- Investments in infrastructure, software and personnel have been substantial. A suitable strategic plan is in place for further equipping the school and there is a sustainable equipment renewal programme. Equipping all teachers with laptop computers and classrooms with either projectors or interactive whiteboards has had an impact on the use of ICT across the school. Overall, strategic leadership is outstanding

### **Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:**

- auditing and developing all teachers' ICT knowledge, skills and understanding to inform a comprehensive plan for their professional development linked to the new VLE
- embedding the new VLE.

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

**John Williams**  
**Additional Inspector**