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30 March 2011

Mrs C Crosskey
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Crosskey

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

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and pupils, during my visit on 18 March 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 pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; observation of two lessons and the podcasting club; and a tour of the school with pupils.

The overall effectiveness of ICT is good.

Achievement in ICT

Achievement in ICT is good.

■ Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with ICT skills and capabilities that vary each year but are generally a little below expectations. They make good progress and enter Year 1 in line with expectations. This good progress continues and by the end of Year 6 standards are above expectation.

■ Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those who speak English as an additional language, are given good support by teachers and teaching assistants, and make equally good progress.

■ The relationships between staff and pupils are excellent. Pupils are very enthusiastic about using ICT and by Year 6 can discuss, with maturity, the opportunities they have to use new technologies in a range of subjects.

- By Year 6 pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of how to keep safe while using new technologies.

Quality of teaching in ICT

The quality of teaching in ICT is good.

- Teaching is good overall and, at times, outstanding. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use this to good effect when planning and delivering lessons.

- Lessons are put into 'real-life' context, so as to further engage and motivate pupils.

- Teachers and teaching assistants use questions effectively to develop pupils' understanding of the skills being learnt. ICT targets for Year 3 to Year 6 pupils are also displayed on the 'Gilbert bus' board in each classroom.

- Teachers make clear to pupils the learning objectives and success criteria of a lesson, so that pupils can self- and peer-assess and set targets.

- Assessment procedures are used well to support planning and to monitor the pupils' progress.

Quality of the curriculum in ICT

The quality of the curriculum in ICT is good.

- The curriculum is well planned. It ensures good progression of skills and good coverage of the National Curriculum.

- Good links are made between ICT and a wide range of subjects.

- Pupils especially enjoy the 'Learning journey' themes where ICT is used to support a range of topics over an extended period of time.

- The after-school podcast club is very well attended and is further developing pupils' ICT and personal and social skills.

- Pupils with limited or no access to ICT at home are able to use school facilities in the homework club.

- Good links have been made with local agencies to develop pupils' ICT skills and their awareness of e-safety.

- The Year 6 residential visit provides pupils with further opportunities to use and develop their ICT skills in a range of activities.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in ICT

Leadership and management in ICT are good.

- The vision for ICT is clear and understood by staff, pupils and governors.

- The ICT team of senior staff, the ICT coordinator, the business manager and two technicians, have ensured that there has been a rapid development in ICT during the last three years.

- Although new to the role, the ICT coordinator has quickly evaluated the strengths and weaknesses of the subject.

- The subject coordinator monitors planning and pupils' work. However, she has had limited time to monitor teaching and learning in lessons or to work alongside colleagues.

- The coordinator has been very well supported by the previous ICT coordinator. The transition between the two leaders has been seamless and continues to build on the many strengths of ICT.

- Technical support is good and ensures that the systems and resources are reliable and available when needed.

- Regular training ensures that staff are aware of hardware and software developments and how to keep pupils, and themselves, safe when using new technologies. New staff receive a good induction into the school's policies and procedures for ICT.

- Governors fully support the development of the subject.

- The school recognises the need to develop its virtual learning environment (VLE) so that it can be used more fully by teachers, pupils, parents, carers and the community in general. Pupils have been consulted on how to improve the VLE and the school's website.

- Self-evaluation is accurate and regularly reviewed. The subject is very well placed to develop further.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- developing the role of the subject coordinator to become more skilled in monitoring and evaluating ICT provision, and especially teaching of ICT

- developing the VLE to enable teachers, pupils, parents and carers to access work and information from home, to support work in school.

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