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Mrs J Kirby  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Kirby

**Ofsted 2011–12 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 18 and 19 May 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 eight lessons including one observed jointly with a member of the senior leadership team.

The overall effectiveness of ICT is good.

**Achievement in ICT**

Achievement in ICT is good.

- Students begin in Year 7 with levels of attainment which are slightly below the national average. By the end of year 9, they are achieving in line with national averages and by the end of Year 11 are above national averages. Achievement is also good in the sixth form. Students are highly enthusiastic users of new technologies in ICT lessons and in other curriculum areas.
- Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported very well in ICT lessons and by teaching assistants at other times. High-quality support and access to ICT facilities mean that these students make good progress.

- Students behave well in ICT lessons. They listen to each other and work well either in groups or independently. In all lessons seen, when using new technologies they respected each other, the staff and the equipment.
- Students are supported to learn how to become safe and responsible users of new technologies through tutor time and assemblies. The school nurse has led sessions on e-safety with groups of vulnerable students.

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

The quality of teaching in ICT is good.

- All teachers of ICT and those who use ICT in their teaching have good subject knowledge and are confident users of ICT. Teachers plan lessons which engage and motivate students.
- The relationships between staff and students are excellent. Staff have good behaviour management skills and lessons provide an excellent environment for students to learn.
- Students are confident and positive about using new technologies. They are encouraged by teachers to develop independent learning skills through paired and group working. The 'Cheney Takeaway' online support materials, developed in an increasing number of curriculum areas, are highly effective and are used by large numbers of students at revision time.
- The use of ICT to support learning across the school is good and improving. Students have very good access to ICT and it is used appropriately in many lessons to develop their learning.
- The assessment of work in ICT lessons is good at Key Stages 3 and 4; students are aware of their progress and know what they need to do to improve their work. However, in other curriculum areas progress in ICT is not monitored.

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

The quality of the curriculum in ICT is good.

- All students at Key Stage 3 receive their entitlement to the statutory National Curriculum during ICT lessons. This curriculum is reviewed regularly and has been recently updated to make it more interesting and enjoyable to the students.
- The curriculum provided at Key Stage 4 for students who opt to study ICT is appropriate and the school is flexible in choosing contexts which will be relevant and interest students. There are significant opportunities in other curriculum areas for those who do not opt to study ICT to develop their skills.
- Sixth-form students choose from a good range of courses which meet their needs and interests well.
- The school has a very proactive approach to curriculum design and this contributes to students' good progress in ICT.

- Students have access to very high-quality opportunities to use ICT in other subjects. In one outstanding English lesson, they were encouraged to access online newspapers to investigate different target audiences. However, this work is not currently monitored or assessed, and this means that some students are receiving better experiences in ICT than others.

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management in ICT is outstanding.

- ICT is led very well at both departmental and senior management levels. Significant progress has been made in the last two years and the leadership team has a clear and shared understanding of both strengths and areas for further development.
- The standard of self-review and evaluation is outstanding and this has supported the school in its work to develop the ICT curriculum to increase challenge and interest, leading to significant improvements in outcomes for students at all levels.
- The school has a very effective ICT project group which is working with the leadership team to enable ICT to be integrated into learning in all areas of the school. There is an expectation that up-to-date technology is used by all teachers.
- The use of data to raise standards and improve provision is excellent. This is having a significant impact on students' achievement and has led to improvements in the ICT curriculum.

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

- improving the quality of students' learning and their progress in ICT throughout the school by sharing best practice, to increase further the proportion of good or better teaching when using ICT
- further developing the curriculum to ensure that the use of ICT in other subjects is monitored and its impact known.

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

**David Brown**  
**Additional Inspector**