

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

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



11 July 2011

Mr P Bowden
Headteacher
Ferryhill Business and Enterprise College
Merrington Road
Ferryhill
County Durham
DL17 8RW

Dear Mr Bowden

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 28 and 29 June 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 four observed jointly with members of the senior leadership team.

The overall effectiveness of ICT is good.

Achievement in ICT

Achievement in ICT is good.

- Students begin Year 7 with levels of attainment in ICT which are below the national average. By the end of Year 9 they are achieving in line with the national average and, by the end of Year 11, are slightly above the national average, with the proportion of students achieving A* or A grades being above the national average. This represents good progress.
- Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well in ICT lessons and make similar progress to their peers. The good quality of teaching and support from teaching assistants means that they make at least good progress.

- Close monitoring of students' progress and very effective programmes of support ensure that no groups of students underachieve. The relationships between staff and students when using ICT are excellent.
- Tutor time and assemblies, at times led by the local police, support students in learning how to become responsible users of new technologies. Students have a very clear understanding of how to keep themselves safe.

Quality of teaching in ICT

The quality of teaching in ICT is good.

- All teachers of ICT have excellent subject knowledge and in the best lessons use this and a wide range of resources to plan activities which engage and motivate students. In less effective lessons, weaker teaching focuses too much on the development of basic skills.
- The assessment of work in ICT lessons is excellent. Students are very aware of their end of unit targets and their teachers ensure that they know how to achieve them. For example, in a Year 10 lesson on the use of macros in databases, the teacher ensured that students were fully aware of what was required to achieve higher levels and this supported their good progress.
- The quality of ICT to support learning across the school is more varied. Students have good access to ICT in other subjects but its use is not coordinated with the ICT curriculum and in some lessons this lowers the expectations of teachers and limits the progress made. In one Year 10 art lesson, the excellent resources available and the high-quality ICT skills of the teacher led to outstanding progress, but in other lessons the expectations of the teacher were too low and limited the students' progress.

Quality of the curriculum in ICT

The quality of the curriculum in ICT is good.

- All students at Key Stages 3 and 4 receive their entitlement to the statutory ICT National Curriculum during ICT lessons. The curriculum is regularly reviewed and updated. This proactive approach to the curriculum contributes to students' good and improving progress.
- The Key Stage 3 curriculum has been designed to ensure that all students are actively engaged. In Year 9, additional extension units have been designed to challenge students and promote higher achievement.
- The school recognises that the current Key Stage 4 curriculum does not match the needs of all students and plans to offer a wider range of ICT qualifications from 2011.
- The school has a virtual learning environment (VLE) which provides students and staff with very good access to their work and to the school's learning resources at all times.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in ICT

The effectiveness of leadership and management in ICT is good.

- ICT is well led at both departmental and senior management levels. Monitoring of the work of the department is regular and accurate and effective self-evaluation is leading to improvements in the ICT curriculum and to raising students' achievement.
- Access to ICT equipment in the school is excellent. The school provides regular opportunities for student support at lunchtime and at after-school clubs. The active use of the VLE in all subjects is enhancing students' achievement across the curriculum and has contributed to their good progress.
- Well-planned and engaging training has been provided for all staff and this has enhanced their ICT knowledge and understanding.

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
 - ensuring that the use of ICT in other subjects is monitored and more effectively linked to the work of the ICT department

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