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Mr P Kilgallon
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Kilgallon

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 pupils, during my visit on 17 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, governors and pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; observation of two lessons; a demonstration of the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) by pupils; and a tour of the school with pupils.

The overall effectiveness of ICT is good.

Achievement in ICT

Achievement in ICT is good

- Pupils enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with levels of attainment that are in line with national expectations. They make good progress throughout the school. By Year 6, standards are above average, especially in communication, presentation and data-handling. These standards are maintained in Year 7.
- As the only combined first and middle school in the authority, approximately half of the pupils in the middle school join from other first schools at Year 5. New pupils are given good guidance and support in ICT. They make the same good progress as other groups of pupils.

- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those identified as gifted and talented are given good support. As a result, they also make good progress.
- Pupils' behaviour and engagement are outstanding. Pupils support each other very well and are eager to share their knowledge of ICT with others.
- Pupils enjoy the work that they do. ICT makes a good contribution to their learning in a range of subjects and also to their outstanding personal, social and emotional development.
- Pupils have an excellent knowledge of how to stay safe when using new technologies in school and at home.

Quality of teaching in ICT

The quality of teaching in ICT is good.

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and use this to good effect when planning and delivering lessons.
- From Year 1 to Year 4, ICT is taught to all classes in the suite by the same teacher. This ensures a consistent approach to teaching.
- This approach does not exclude teachers and teaching assistants from their responsibilities for teaching ICT. Teachers are fully involved in the planning and teaching of ICT within their classrooms.
- Teachers make clear the learning objectives and success criteria of a lesson, so that pupils can self- and peer-assess.
- New assessment and tracking procedures have been introduced, which are beginning to inform teachers and senior leaders more accurately of pupils' progress and attainment. However, these new procedures are not yet embedded.

Quality of the curriculum in ICT

The quality of the curriculum in ICT is good.

- The curriculum is well planned and meets the interests of the pupils. It ensures good progression of skills. There is a good emphasis on communication, presenting and data-handling.
- However, the school recognises that aspects of data-logging and monitoring are less well developed.
- Good links are being made between ICT, literacy, numeracy and foundation subjects.
- There is a strong emphasis on 'thinking skills' during ICT lessons, which supports pupils' understanding of their strengths in ICT and what they need to do to improve.
- Pupils identified as gifted and talented attend cluster days for ICT and initiatives organised by local business partnership links.

- Pupils who do not have regular access to ICT at home are able to use school facilities before and during school time.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in ICT

The effectiveness of leadership and management in ICT is good.

- ICT is led well. A clear and effective vision for the subject is shared by staff, governors and pupils.
- Staff have received training on keeping pupils, and themselves, safe while using new technologies.
- Very good use is made of the VLE to enable teachers, pupils, parents and governors to access work and information at home, as well as at school, to support pupils' learning. The local authority has acknowledged that the school is a leading practitioner in the development of the VLE.
- Parents are well informed, through meetings in school, information on the VLE and newsletters, on how to keep their children, and themselves, safe when using new technologies.
- Governors fully support the development of the subject and the financial investment involved.
- Self-evaluation is accurate. The strengths and areas for development of ICT are known well by staff and governors.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- embedding the new assessment procedures, so that pupils are better informed of how well they are progressing against their targets and how they can achieve the next level in their ICT work
- improving the curriculum for ICT by developing the use of data-logging, monitoring and use of sensors and increasing the resources for these aspects.

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