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29 November 2011

Mrs S Smythe  
Headteacher  
Kelvin Hall School  
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Dear Mrs Smythe

**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 14 and 15 November 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 nine lessons, including four observed jointly with members of the senior leadership team.

The overall effectiveness of ICT is satisfactory.

**Achievement in ICT**

Achievement in ICT is satisfactory.

- Students enter the school with levels of attainment in ICT which are broadly in line with national averages. By the end of Year 9, they are achieving in line with national averages. In Key Stage 4, all students follow a core vocational ICT course with additional accreditation available as an option choice. Students following these courses make satisfactory but improving progress.
- Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well in ICT lessons. High-quality support and access to ICT facilities mean that these students make good progress.

- The relationships between staff and students when using ICT are good and in the best lessons students behave well. 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 responsible users of new technologies through ICT lessons and the personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) curriculum and have a clear understanding of how to keep themselves safe. The impact of this teaching on the students' understanding of e-safety is good.

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

The quality of teaching in ICT is satisfactory.

- All teachers of ICT and those who use ICT in their teaching have good subject knowledge and are confident users of ICT. In better lessons teachers plan work which engages and motivates students but in other lessons all the students were asked to do the same tasks. This lack of differentiation and pace can lead to poor behaviour with some students. Although some ICT teaching supports students in developing their independent learning skills, opportunities are missed for group or paired work and, in these lessons, learning can become too teacher-focused.
- The use of ICT to support learning across the school is satisfactory and improving. Students have good access to ICT and it is used appropriately in many lessons to develop their learning. Teachers in English, science and music lessons, for example, use ICT effectively to enthuse and engage students. However, in other curriculum areas, progress in ICT is not monitored and this can limit the progress made.
- The assessment of work in ICT lessons is satisfactory at Key Stage 3 and good at Key Stage 4; where assessment is good students are aware of their progress and know what they need to do to improve their work.

### **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 ICT National Curriculum during ICT lessons. This curriculum is reviewed regularly and has been recently updated to increase the challenge in Year 9 where all students now take a vocational qualification.
- The vocational 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 beyond the core curriculum to develop their skills. However, this work is not currently monitored or assessed, and this can lower the expectations of teachers and so limit the progress made. This

lack of coordination 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 good.

- Senior leaders and managers have a good overview of strengths and weaknesses in ICT and plans to develop the subject further in the new school buildings are in place. They are well-informed of current developments in the subject. ICT has a prominent and increasing profile in the school.
- The rigorous system of self-review leads into a well-considered ICT development plan which is driving improvements in outcomes for students.
- Access to ICT equipment throughout the school is excellent and will improve further when the school moves from the current cramped buildings.
- Well-planned and engaging training has been provided by the school 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 by:
  - providing all students with activities and tasks which are suitably matched to their abilities and interests
  - sharing best practice, in particular in using assessment information to enable differentiated activities in lessons
  - ensuring that the use of ICT in other subjects is more effectively monitored and linked to the work of the ICT department
- ensuring that the school's detailed and well-considered plans for ICT are implemented to ensure that ICT has a high profile in the life of the school and makes a significant impact on students' achievement in all curriculum areas.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop ICT in the school.

As 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. A copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

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