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30 November 2011

Mr R Lord  
Principal  
Ken Stimpson Community School  
Staniland Way  
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Peterborough  
PE4 6JT

Dear Mr Lord

**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 23 and 24 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 seven lessons.

The overall effectiveness of ICT is good.

**Achievement in ICT**

Achievement in ICT is good.

- In 2011, virtually all students in Year 11 achieved the equivalent of one GCSE in ICT, and many achieved two GCSEs. This represents a significant improvement from three years ago. Progress from when students enter school with below average ICT attainment to the end of Year 11 is therefore good. End of Key Stage 3 results are average or below but in line with the cohort targets. Relatively few students go on to study ICT post-16; here results are satisfactory though few attain the higher grades.
- Currently, most Key Stage 4 students are in line to achieve or exceed their targets. The considerable numbers who enter the school part way through Key Stage 4 make excellent and swift progress.

- Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities progress well. The school has very effective inclusion systems that impact positively on these students. The impact of teaching on students' understanding of e-safety through modules in the ICT curriculum, assemblies, and their personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme is good. Students have a well-developed understanding of how to stay safe and secure. Their behaviour in ICT lessons or when using ICT is mostly good although sometimes boys drift off task. Students' speaking skills are not strong, although when given the opportunity they work well together in pairs, listening to each other. Sometimes they rely too much on the teacher for support.

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

The quality of teaching in ICT is good.

- Teachers of ICT always make sure that the learning objectives are displayed at the beginning of the lesson though not all make sure students thoroughly understand them. Relationships between teachers and students are good, especially when students are receiving one-to-one support. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and they answer students' questions confidently, using the technical subject vocabulary very well. Often lessons are imaginative and engage the students well, but there are occasions when opportunities are missed to develop students' understanding or extend their independence and literacy skills.
- Teaching using ICT in other subjects is impressive, particularly in media studies; students also speak highly of the ICT work they do in art lessons. Most teachers use electronic whiteboards regularly; however, there are few of these boards in the school that allow the students to interact with technology. The use of the virtual learning environment (VLE) is developing well as a tool to learn and there are some examples of good practice, especially with post-16 students.
- Assessment for learning is good; lessons begin with a sound evaluation of students' prior knowledge, skills and understanding. The assessment of ICT as a subject is very regular and effective in Key Stage 4. In Key Stage 3 it is less good because it is not fully linked to National Curriculum levels. In addition, students' achievements in ICT in other subjects do not feed back into the overall assessment of their ICT capability. Target-setting is a key feature in improving attainment over the last three years. Students know what level they are working at and what they have to do to obtain the next higher level.

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

The quality of the curriculum in ICT is satisfactory.

- The school is aware that the compressed Key Stage 3 curriculum needs extra challenge and is in the process of drafting a new version that includes more multimedia and computing. The current curriculum provides a sound basis for progression from the beginning of Year 9 into a

vocational award programme. The Key Stage 4 course is also under review to provide opportunities for students to study other routes into ICT and to provide better progression into post-16, thus encouraging more to follow an ICT-based course after Year 11.

- Cross-curricular ICT is beginning to be embedded in other subjects and has been mapped across all subjects to begin the process of coordinating ICT across the school. This has yet to inform a whole-school plan for the delivery of ICT.

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management in ICT is good.

- Standards have improved significantly over the last three years despite staff and student turbulence. These difficulties have been managed very well. The department has sought and received good help from the local authority in this time. The subject, identified as being underperforming three years ago, has been monitored and supported extremely well by senior managers and governors. Self-evaluation is good, uses a wide range of data and other sources of evidence, and leads into a sharply focused improvement plan.
- There is a clear and understood vision for ICT both as a subject and across the school. The infrastructure to support this vision is good; it is reliable and technically very well supported. Staff are full of praise for the support they receive from senior managers and the technical team at the school. Overall the school shows good capacity to improve ICT further.

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

- raising attainment further by:
  - improving the Key Stage 3 curriculum
  - revising the Key Stage 4 and sixth form curricula to provide more options and improve progression into the sixth form
  - promoting students' independence and speaking skills in lessons.

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

**John Williams**  
**Additional Inspector**