23 January 2012

Mr J McEachern
Headteacher
The Sanders Draper School and
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Suttons Lane
Hornchurch
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Dear Mr McEachern

Ofsted 2011–12 subject survey inspection programme: information and communication technology (ICT)

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and students, during my visit on 18 and 19 January 2012 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.

The overall effectiveness of ICT is satisfactory.

Achievement in ICT

Achievement in ICT is satisfactory.

■ Students' achievement in ICT is satisfactory. Key stage 3 results are mostly in line with national averages as are the end of Key Stage 4 examination results, although they have fluctuated over the last three years. Students achieve soundly across the programme of study with the exception of data-logging where their progress is hampered by a lack of suitable equipment. They understand the principles of commonly used office applications and produce good work in multimedia such as video and movie-making. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because they receive targeted support from teaching assistants and specialist staff.

- Students' response to teaching is excellent; their behaviour is always at least good and often outstanding. They are mature and independent learners who work very well together, especially boys working with girls, to support each other. They have well-developed speaking and listening skills and are confident discussing their work with adults. This is a key positive feature of their progress.

Quality of teaching in ICT

The quality of teaching in ICT is satisfactory.

- Although satisfactory overall, the quality of teaching is very variable. Some good teaching using ICT was observed in English and mathematics lessons where the interactive whiteboard and the internet were used to teach something that would otherwise be difficult to teach. There is evidence to show that students have opportunities to apply and extend their ICT understanding in a range of other subjects where teachers use the interactive whiteboards or video clips to engage them in their learning. However, opportunities to use ICT interactively are missed.

- At times, the teaching of ICT as a subject has good elements such as pace, group discussion and peer-assessment. The best teaching engages students in activities that do not use the computer but prepare them well for using the equipment at a later stage. A good feature is the use of a network managing tool that displays the teacher's monitor on all the students' monitors at the same time. Teachers' subject knowledge is sound but errors and misconceptions are not always dealt with properly. Some teaching does not manage transition well; here there is too much teacher talk or interruption at the expense of student activity.

- The summative assessment of ICT is being developed into a more robust system than has previously been used. Assessment for learning is used appropriately in most lessons to inform the next stage of learning. Targets are known by the students but not often referred to in lessons.

Quality of the curriculum in ICT

The quality of the curriculum in ICT is satisfactory.

- There has been much change in the ICT curriculum over recent years and the school has now settled on a single GCSE ICT course for all students in Key Stage 4. In Key Stage 3, the modules are up to date and cover the programme of study appropriately. Teaching about e-safety does not begin until Year 8 which, together with a lack of systematic personal, social and health education, or assembly programme for teaching students how to stay safe using computers, results in a lack of progression in their understanding of this area.

- The cross-curriculum aspect of ICT is not led or managed at senior team level and thus its coordination is at an early stage of development. Some staff use email to set and receive students' homework and the art department have created 'wikis' to support students in their learning. The special educational needs and/or disabilities department has created its

own website which is used extensively. As yet, none of this good work has been developed into a working virtual learning environment (VLE).

Effectiveness of leadership and management in ICT

The effectiveness of leadership and management in ICT is satisfactory.

- There has been much turbulence in staffing over the last three years and the impact of leadership and management on teaching, the curriculum and achievement is only satisfactory. The department reviews its examination results each year and has used this to inform curriculum changes. Individual students' progress against their targets is monitored regularly.

- The development plan that emerges from the self-evaluation focuses on the correct areas to raise students' achievement and improve the quality of teaching and learning, although as a plan its usefulness is limited by a lack of detail, implications for resources, and imprecise evaluation indicators. It is not yet linked to a plan for the professional development of staff. The self-evaluation itself is narrow in its evidence base.

- Senior leaders are accurate in their assessment of teaching and learning. You are aware of the strengths and weaknesses and what is needed to improve; the school demonstrates satisfactory capacity to improve.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- improving teaching and learning by bringing all teaching up to the standard of the best now occurring in school
- improving strategic leadership and management of cross-curricular ICT
- improving subject leadership through better self-evaluation and development planning.

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