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Miss H Cooper
Headteacher
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Dear Miss Cooper

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 pupils, during my visit on 23 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 pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of six lessons.

The overall effectiveness of ICT is satisfactory.

Achievement in ICT

Achievement in ICT is satisfactory.

- Pupils' achievement is satisfactory; it is mostly in line with national expectations although relatively few pupils achieve higher levels. Their work has strengths in presenting, communicating and handling information but weaknesses in the multimedia aspects of ICT, including the use of video and images. Pupils have experience of programming and control but lack confidence in these areas.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress through support from teaching assistants.

- The impact of teaching on pupils' understanding of how to stay safe using computers is good. Pupils' response to teaching is also good; they enjoy their ICT and work well together. Their behaviour is excellent.

Quality of teaching in ICT

The quality of teaching in ICT is satisfactory.

- All teachers plan carefully for 'learning intention' and 'success criteria'. However, they often carefully follow their lesson plan rather than use their instinct to take opportunities to extend pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding as they arise, especially in developing understanding of key ICT vocabulary. Some lessons contain too much teacher explanation at the expense of pupils getting on with work at the computers. Pupils are encouraged to assess themselves and each other, and this works well.
- Teachers' skills in using technology are good when they use the computers or interactive whiteboards and they answer pupils' questions accurately. In general, though, questioning is closed and does not provide opportunities for pupils to extend their speaking skills. Some excellent use of ICT was observed, for example, in a lesson on the lunar cycle. This would have been very difficult to teach without using ICT. The lesson was imaginative and pupils made good progress in their understanding of how the earth and moon orbited. In some lessons, opportunities are taken to extend pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education but in others these are missed.
- Assessment for learning is used well to plan the next stage of learning; final assessment at the end of a piece of work is not so well done and the school is moving to a system that better assesses pupils' ICT knowledge, skills and understanding.

Quality of the curriculum in ICT

The quality of the curriculum in ICT is satisfactory.

- The teaching of e-safety is covered appropriately through personal, social and health education, assemblies, and when it arises in discussion in lessons. The ICT curriculum is broadly based on a national scheme of work, but does not provide challenge in some areas such as multimedia and web authoring. School documentation contains a useful summary of the areas of study, topic by topic each half term, but this is not yet in sufficient detail. Opportunities for pupils to apply their understanding or extend their ICT skills are made by teachers through both the core subjects and the creative curriculum, although this is limited by the lack of access to mobile technology and restricted wireless access in the school.
- The school has made efforts to use ICT to communicate with pupils through email and steps are in place to implement a virtual learning environment. The current ICT infrastructure, while providing an effective e-safety and filtering system, blocks applications that teachers would find helpful to use in their teaching. Pupils are aware of and excited about the possibilities of linking their work done at home with that done at school.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in ICT

The effectiveness of leadership and management in ICT is satisfactory.

- There has been much change in leadership and management and in the way ICT is delivered which has resulted in some discontinuity in recent years. The school has not evaluated the impact of its ICT teaching on pupils' outcomes and as such the ICT development plan does not reflect the aspirations of the whole-school development plan. Its usefulness as a management tool is limited because it does not identify the professional development needs of staff.
- Senior staff are accurate in their assessment of teaching and learning and have identified the strengths and areas for development in ICT. An accurate and clear plan is in place for the strategic allocation of resources that will provide a better infrastructure for ICT.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- improving standards and progress by providing a more challenging and up-to-date ICT curriculum that embraces multimedia, web and video technologies and programming
- improving teaching and learning by taking opportunities to develop pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding, including literacy and key ICT vocabulary, when opportunities arise in lessons
- improving the quality of self-evaluation, improvement planning and the identification of training needs.

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