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Mrs E Kay-Devanney  
Headteacher  
Blackgates Primary School  
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Dear Mrs Kay-Devanney

**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 with Jeremy Spencer HMI on 27 March 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 three lessons.

The overall effectiveness of ICT is good.

**Achievement in ICT**

Achievement in ICT is good.

- Pupils begin in the Early Years Foundation Stage with levels of attainment which are below the national average. They make good progress throughout the school and, by the end of Year 6, leave with standards that are slightly above the national average, especially in communication and presentation. This represents good progress.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those with limited access to new technologies at home, are given highly effective support by teachers and teaching assistants, and make the same good progress as other groups of pupils.

- Pupils' behaviour in lessons is good and at times outstanding. They listen to each other and work well together, showing enjoyment in what they are doing. Lesson observations and discussions with pupils indicate that they are very positive about ICT and are enthusiastic users of ICT to support their learning in all areas of the curriculum.

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

The quality of teaching in ICT is good.

- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and use this to plan activities which engage and motivate pupils. Teachers and teaching assistants use an effective range of resources well to develop independent learning skills. For example, in an excellent Year 6 lesson pupils' understanding of robotics was supported by the use of a commercial car advertisement, the preparation of a card model robot and by their control of an animated computer arm. The following discussion highlighted the enthusiasm of the pupils for the topic and their understanding of the importance of carefully programming their robots.
- The relationships between staff and pupils are excellent. Teachers have high expectations and all lessons are positive environments for pupils to learn in.
- The use of assessment, monitoring and tracking in ICT is at the early stages of development. Pupils are not involved in recording their achievements and so have no clear understanding of what they need to do to improve. This has been identified in the development plan as an area for improvement.
- The use of ICT to support learning across the school is good. Pupils have very good access to ICT and it is used appropriately in many curriculum areas to develop their learning.

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

The quality of the curriculum in ICT is good.

- All pupils receive their entitlement to the statutory ICT National Curriculum. The curriculum has been recently reviewed and updated to increase pupils' interest and enthusiasm. Excellent links have been established with the local City Learning Centre (CLC) to provide additional resources where appropriate.
- Effective links are being developed between ICT, literacy, numeracy and the creative curriculum. This is having a very positive impact on pupils' achievement. Pupils are able to explain how ICT supports their learning in a wide range of subjects.
- The school has plans to develop a virtual learning environment (VLE) to improve access for pupils and parents to both their work and to curriculum resources to support their learning.
- The school places a very high priority on keeping children safe when using ICT and e-safety teaching within the school is outstanding. Pupils are

supported to learn how to become responsible users of new technologies in lessons and through assemblies, and have a clear understanding of how to keep themselves safe whether at school or at home. The school also provides effective support on e-safety for staff and parents.

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management in ICT is good.

- Senior leaders have a good overview of strengths and weaknesses in ICT within the school and effective plans to develop the subject are in place. They are well informed of current developments in the subject.
- Staff training needs are audited. This audit is then used to provide teachers and teaching assistants with individual training, at times through the local CLC, to enable them to support the pupils to make better progress.
- The school has formed effective partnerships with a cluster of local primary and secondary schools which support the development of ICT within the school. Technical support is good and ensures that systems are reliable and available when needed.
- Self-evaluation is accurate and the school has a very good capacity to improve further.

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

- improving the quality of pupils' learning and their progress in ICT by using assessment information more effectively to monitor, support and challenge pupils
- ensuring that pupils are aware of their individual targets for ICT so that they know what they need to do to improve
- enabling pupils and their parents and carers to access work and information from home in order to support pupils' learning in school

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**