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Miss J Greethurst
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Dear Miss Greethurst

Ofsted survey inspection programme – ICT

I am grateful to you, your colleagues and the pupils for your help during my visit on 18 September 2006. As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of ICT, the visit had a particular focus on the impact of ICT on whole-school improvement. 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.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included: interviews with staff and pupils as well as scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of lessons in Years 1 and 4.

The overall effectiveness of ICT was judged to be satisfactory.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in ICT are broadly satisfactory.

- Attainment is satisfactory by the end of Key Stage 2, but there is still some underachievement where the scheme of work for ICT has not been followed closely enough by a minority of staff.
- The application of ICT is beginning to impact on raising standards of attainment particularly in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils are not afraid to explore new technology and are able to concentrate for extended periods of time.
- Pupils' personal development benefits from opportunities to work collaboratively and support each other.

Quality of teaching and learning of ICT

The quality of teaching and learning of ICT is satisfactory.

- Where teaching is best the learning objectives are clear and pupils understand the purpose of the lesson; there are good cross-curricular links, which help pupils to apply and build on their existing knowledge and put their learning into a meaningful context.
- Additional adults provide good support and work is tailored to the individual needs of all pupils.
- Where there are weaknesses in teaching there are insufficient planned opportunities for pupils to talk in pairs before they begin writing and they are not encouraged to rehearse how they might articulate their answers verbally. There are missed opportunities of reinforcing basic literacy and numeracy skills and expectations of what pupils can achieve are at times low.
- Teachers and pupils are developing a growing awareness of the level descriptors for ICT. This is largely due to the helpful assessment sheets which are displayed in every class. However the evaluation of pupils' progress in ICT is not used consistently by staff to inform subsequent planning. Furthermore, data is not interrogated rigorously enough and the school has only recently started gathering the appropriate level of data to monitor progress and target underachievement.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the ICT curriculum is satisfactory.

- The school has developed its own scheme of work which was formally adopted in June 2006. The programme of work now includes all the strands of the programmes of study for ICT.
- The programme and planned activities as well as the increased access to ICT are contributing significantly to pupils' enjoyment of learning.
- The application of ICT across the curriculum is in its early stages of development and requires further improvement.
- The school does not have a curriculum overview which identifies links between ICT and other subjects.
- Teachers, who are confident and competent users of ICT, encourage pupils to be creative and innovative in their use of ICT. However, this aspect remains largely underdeveloped because pupils are not allowed sufficient choice of when to use ICT in non ICT based lessons.

Leadership and management of ICT

The quality of subject leadership and management is satisfactory.

- The quality of provision for ICT is monitored and evaluated.
- The training needs of staff has been audited and there is good training provided for teaching and support staff. This also includes opportunities for staff to observe demonstration lessons.
- The policy which promotes the responsible use of the internet has not been updated since 2001 and it needs to be reviewed.
- There is no specific policy for ICT and a lack of guidance about how ICT can be used to enhance teaching as well as support and extend learning.

The impact of ICT on whole-school improvement

The impact of ICT on whole school improvement is inadequate.

- The school has recently invested heavily in purchasing new hardware and this has significantly increased pupils' access to ICT.
- ICT is helping to facilitate administrative tasks for staff and is beginning to contribute to raising standards at Key Stage 2.
- The school improvement plan does not make reference to how investment in ICT will contribute to school improvement or lead to raising standards.
- Action plans for ICT do not include strategies or criteria to evaluate the impact of ICT initiatives on pupils' learning.
- Although ICT is included within the remit of all managers they are not all sufficiently clear about each others' roles and responsibilities.
- The school's performance management cycle does not include sufficient reference to ICT within its process.

Inclusion

- The impact of ICT on promoting greater levels of inclusion is good and a strength of the school.
- Pupils who are reluctant writers welcome the opportunity to use ICT to support their writing.
- ICT helps pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities to access the curriculum and develop basic skills.
- ICT has had a significant impact on increasing levels of attendance of targeted pupils, including pupils at risk of exclusion.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- to promote greater levels of consistency in the implementation of the ICT scheme of work

- to ensure that data is interrogated rigorously to provide a whole school overview of the progress made by different groups of pupils
- to identify clear links between ICT and other subjects and firmly embed the application of ICT across the curriculum
- to review and update the policy which covers the responsible use of the internet and ensuring there is sufficient guidance for staff about ICT as a subject
- to ensure that improvement plans and the school's performance management process make reference to ICT where appropriate and include success criteria which measure the outcomes for learners.

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

As I explained in my previous letter, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term.

Yours sincerely

Gehane Gordelier
Her Majesty's Inspector