

23 September 2006

Mr Legg
Headteacher
Harry Carlton Comprehensive School
Lantern Lane
East Leake
Loughborough
Leicestershire
LE12 6QN

Dear Mr Legg

Ofsted survey inspection programme – ICT

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 21-22 September to look at work in ICT.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of ICT, the visit had a particular focus on the assessment of ICT and the readiness of the school for the onscreen Key Stage 3 ICT test.

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. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included: interviews with staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of four lessons.

The overall effectiveness of ICT was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in ICT are satisfactory.

- Standards in ICT are around the national average. This represents a satisfactory level of achievement.

- The widespread underachievement in ICT in the recent past has now been overcome. Pupils have made particularly good progress during the last year and standards are now rising rapidly.
- Pupils are extremely enthusiastic about ICT. For many, it is their favourite subject. They work hard and concentrate very well in ICT lessons. Many spend a great deal of time working on their own initiative at lunchtime and after school.

Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning in ICT is good.

- Teaching is consistently of a high standard, with much that is outstanding. Pupils often make rapid gains in their knowledge, understanding and skills in ICT lessons.
- Teachers have very high expectations of pupils and a great deal of work is covered in individual lessons. Standards of discipline are excellent.
- In other subjects, there is not enough use of ICT to improve teaching methods and enrich the experience of pupils.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory.

- All pupils study ICT in all years. Tasks are relevant and interest the pupils. Lower attaining pupils receive good support in lessons, while the higher attainers are always given challenging tasks to complete.
- In other subjects, few teachers use ICT in their lessons to enable pupils to apply their ICT capability. There is some good work, such as in design and technology, but most subjects have insufficient access to computers.

Leadership and management of ICT

Leadership and management of ICT are good.

- The ICT manager provides outstanding leadership. Standards are improving rapidly across the school. Underachievement has been tackled successfully. There is an exceptional vision for ICT to become the leading subject in the school, with excellent plans to ensure that this vision becomes reality.
- The school has an accurate picture of standards and the progress of pupils. Provision is monitored well, although the analysis of strengths and weakness in teaching is insufficiently detailed.
- Management is good. Deficiencies from the past, which led to underachievement, have been addressed successfully.

- Weaknesses in the use of ICT in other subjects remain, but there are clear plans to improve this aspect, based on the school's recently awarded specialist status.

Assessment of ICT and the readiness of the school for the onscreen Key Stage 3 ICT test

Assessment is outstanding.

- The school has a remarkably comprehensive system for assessing pupils' standards and tracking their progress. This provides an accurate assessment of their standards on joining the school and enables challenging targets to be set for every pupil.
- Pupils speak very highly of the assessment system and the resulting academic guidance they receive.
- Teachers use the information generated to provide excellent guidance to pupils on what they need to do to improve.
- The school is well prepared for the onscreen Key Stage 3 ICT test. Considerable investment has been made in improving the central servers so there is plenty of spare capacity. The trial run carried out this year went very smoothly, and has allowed staff to adjust the curriculum for next year to provide a better experience for pupils. The tests produced a high degree of agreement with the school's own assessments

Inclusion

The school works hard to ensure all pupils are equally involved in ICT and make good progress. Pupils who are potentially disruptive, or who are disaffected, respond very well to the teaching methods used and make very good progress. Lower attainers in particular are helped to improve the quality of their presentation, which raises their self-confidence and levels of self-esteem.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- to increase the number of computers available for use in other subjects
- to ensure more teachers use ICT as a part of their lessons on a frequent and regular basis.

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 be published on Ofsted's website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

David Driscoll
Additional Inspector