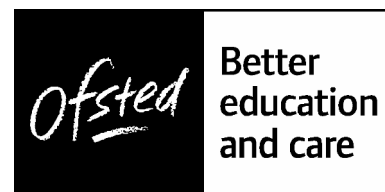


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29 November 2006

Mrs Power
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Dear Mrs Power

Ofsted survey inspection programme – ICT

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 27 November, 2006 to look at work in information and communication technology (ICT).

As outlined in my initial letter, the visit had a particular focus on ICT and its impact 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. 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 a governor, staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of three lessons.

The overall effectiveness of ICT was judged to be satisfactory.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in ICT are satisfactory.

- Standards in Year 2 are broadly in line with the national expectations. In Year 6 although standards are broadly average in some areas of ICT, poorly configured and unreliable computer equipment has impeded pupils' progress and depressed the standards. As a result,

the attainment of Year 6 pupils in relation to sharing and exchanging information (particularly through email), the use of simulations and models to hypothesise and pupils' knowledge and understanding of strategies to search the internet is lower than it should be.

- In the foundation stage the range of activities and resources available enables pupils to develop skills in using the computer keyboard and mouse and to give instructions, for example, to a remote controlled car, washing machine or programmable toy. They are able to learn about the uses of technology such as microwaves and CD players.
- In both Key Stages 1 and 2 pupils manipulate text confidently and know how ICT can help them find information, although older pupils are not aware of more advanced search strategies. They are skilful in manipulating shapes and creating pictures using drawing programs and older pupils know how to enhance the presentation of their work through digital photography and the use of presentational software.
- Pupils enjoy using ICT. They are excited by the opportunities they have to experiment with the use of the tablet computers and by their teachers' use of interactive whiteboards. Their behaviour in lessons and around the school is outstanding.

Quality of teaching and learning of ICT

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

- Pupils are enthusiastic in lessons involving ICT and eager to answer questions. They show a high level of self-confidence, even when using resources which are new to them, and are not daunted by any difficulties they encounter. They readily share their knowledge and skills with each other. Their ability to work collaboratively and independently is equally good.
- Teachers' expertise when using and teaching ICT varies. Nonetheless, they show a commitment to incorporate aspects of ICT within lessons and to explore the use of new technologies, including tablet computers. Some teaching is outstanding with, for example, the very effective deployment of teaching assistants to support and assess the development of pupils' ICT capability and very good opportunities for pupils to think for themselves and review and evaluate their use of ICT.
- The assessment of ICT capability and the tracking of pupils' progress have improved this term. However, pupils do not receive enough

feedback on the progress they are making in ICT to ensure that they know precisely what they need to improve. Target-setting to raise standards in ICT is under-developed.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory.

- There is good provision for pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of everyday technology and skills in manipulating the computer keyboard within the reception class.
- In Key Stage 1 and 2 weekly ICT lessons are based on the units of work provided by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. The school recognises the need to review this provision to ensure that pupils have access to all aspects of the National Curriculum programmes of study and that there is sufficient challenge for the more able pupils.
- In addition to their weekly lesson, pupils have opportunities to apply their ICT knowledge, skills and understanding in other subjects. At present this provision is not mapped so that the school can identify where and when it occurs.

Leadership and management of ICT

Leadership and management of ICT are good.

- You, together with the active support of the governing body, demonstrate very strong and effective leadership of ICT. During your first term at the school you carried out a thorough review of the school's ICT provision and accurately identified what it needs to do to improve. There is now a clear plan for the improvement of ICT which is aligned to the national self-review framework. This provides a sound basis for development.
- The school has made rapid progress over the last term and a half, particularly in overcoming the barriers presented by unreliable computer equipment. This, and well targeted training and support, has added to the confidence and skills of staff. There is openness to change and a desire on the part of senior and middle leaders to plan this carefully and involve all staff.

The impact of ICT on whole-school improvement

- The school has not monitored or evaluated achievement and standards or provision in ICT closely enough because it has been preoccupied with other priorities. The ICT co-ordinator's new job description helpfully clarifies her responsibility for monitoring and evaluating ICT. Although still at an early stage of development, the improvement to the tracking of pupils' progress is beginning to provide the school with a more accurate picture of standards in ICT.
- The recent "Hands-on Support" audit of staff ICT skills has helped identify the need for a more systematic approach to continuing professional development in this area. A training day in October has updated staff skills in the use of the interactive whiteboards and further training is planned. The plan for the ICT co-ordinator to take part in the 'Leading from the Middle' training and for you to attend the national training in ICT for senior leaders has the potential to further strengthen the school's leadership and management capacity.

Inclusion

The provision for inclusion is satisfactory.

- Teachers and teaching assistants work effectively together to support the development of pupils' ICT capability. The school's inclusive approach to the provision of professional development and training offers all staff the opportunity to develop and maintain up-to-date ICT skills and expertise.
- In one outstanding lesson, the grouping of pupils was based upon their ICT capability. This, together with the targeted support of the teacher and teaching assistants, contributed to the very good progress made by the pupils.
- The school has not yet audited pupils' use of ICT at home but understands the need to do so to ensure that the curriculum is better matched to their needs.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included the need to:

- raise standards by ensuring that the school's planning for ICT embraces all aspects of the National Curriculum programme of study

and clearly indicates where opportunities exist for pupils' ICT capability to be applied through other subject contexts

- strengthen the assessment of ICT capability and ensure that the outcomes are used to inform teachers' planning and enable pupils to have a clear view of what they need to improve
- identify and share the very good practice which exists in the school in the teaching of ICT.

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

Rhona Seviour
Her Majesty's Inspector