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Mrs Halbert  
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Dear Mrs Halbert

Ofsted survey inspection programme – ICT

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff and students, during my visit on 6-7 December 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 focus on the assessment of ICT.

The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to our national evaluation and reporting. Published reports are likely to list the name of your school, but you 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 students, scrutiny of documentation, analysis of students' work and observation of lessons.

The overall effectiveness of ICT is judged to be satisfactory.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are satisfactory.

- Students begin in Year 7 with standards that are below average and although they make satisfactory progress by the end of Year 11, few achieve the higher levels.
- Since the teaching focuses on the Key Stage 3 ICT national strategy students achieve across all the areas of the National Curriculum programme of study.
- Year 9 students and those in Key Stage 4 make limited use of ICT in other subjects and this does not help to embed their knowledge, skills and understanding. Students' opportunities to apply ICT in other contexts are dependent upon the subject and the individual teacher.

- GCSE results improved in 2006 and in the one DIDA lesson observed in Year 10 students were achieving well. However, those in Year 11 studying ECDL are making relatively little progress from Key Stage 3.

### Quality of teaching and learning of ICT

Teaching and learning are satisfactory.

- In one exemplary lesson observed, students progressed at a pace due to high quality planning, teaching and class management.
- Good teaching observed had pace, challenge, good behaviour management and class organisation. The very best had excellent mid plenary sessions that were timed expertly so as to teach a specific point to the whole class.
- In the weaker lessons there was a mix up in the planning between 'outcome' and 'objective' and the lessons proceeded in very small incremental steps with little opportunity for the students to progress at their own pace.
- Overall, most teachers are confident in their knowledge of ICT to teach their own subject. However, they are less confident when it comes to students' learning using ICT as they are not always aware of students' ICT capability.
- Students' personal development is very good in many ways. Behaviour and willingness to learn are of a high standard. Students are keen, cooperative and relationships are good.

### Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory.

- Much of the Key Stage 3 strategy material is in use, though it does not build well on the Key Stage 2 ICT experience of individual students.
- The introduction of DIDA and ECDL courses means that all students have access to an ICT core curriculum in Key Stage 4, but the latter does not provide either progression from Year 9 or a suitable course for those also studying for an examination in ICT in Year 11.
- The school has recognised the need to improve aspects of the ICT curriculum. It has begun to audit students' ICT experiences in other subjects. As yet there is no curriculum map that indicates what students are doing in their core ICT lessons or in other subjects.

### Leadership and management of ICT

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory.

- Internal and external self evaluation takes place and teaching and learning are assessed through regular class observation.

- There are plans to improve the management of the subject, particularly in curriculum planning.

## Assessment

Assessment in ICT is satisfactory.

- However, the school has not prepared well for the onscreen ICT tests at the end of Key Stage 3. It has not been involved in trials and the current Year 9 students have yet to take part in practice tests.

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

- audit students' ICT knowledge, skills and understanding on entry or take data from the end of Key Stage 2 to inform planning at the beginning of Key Stage 3
- provide more coherent opportunities for students to apply their ICT capability in other subjects
- address the ICT curriculum in Key Stage 4 to provide progression for all students
- modify the curriculum, teaching and learning in Key Stage 3 to ensure that students are better prepared for the onscreen test.

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

John Williams  
Her Majesty's Inspector