Ofsted **Better education and care**

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Dear Mrs Griffin

Ofsted survey inspection programme – ICT

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 12-13 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 particular 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 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 lessons.

The overall effectiveness of ICT was judged to be satisfactory.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in ICT are satisfactory.

- By the end of Year 11, for those pupils who choose to study ICT GCSE, standards in ICT are well above average and their progress is very good. Most other pupils make satisfactory progress.
- Pupils' progress in Years 7 to 9, whilst satisfactory, is constrained because insufficient curriculum time is allocated to ICT. This also inhibits the development of their independent learning skills.

- The development of pupils' ICT capability across the curriculum is varied. In modern languages, ICT is used very effectively to engage pupils' interest and improve their speaking and listening skills.
- Students in the sixth form make good progress in ICT.
- Pupils' personal development is good. They enjoy their ICT lessons because of the good relationships between pupils and adults.

Quality of teaching and learning of ICT

The quality of teaching and learning in ICT is satisfactory.

- Teachers' planning is detailed although some ICT lessons are rushed. Teachers focus more on ensuring that pupils get through a set amount of work rather than what they will learn in the lesson. As a consequence, pupils do not always have sufficient opportunity to use the more advanced features of the software used or to reflect on their ICT experiences. Specific topics are not covered in enough depth, particularly in Years 7 to 9.
- In the sixth form, teachers use blogging websites very effectively to engage students in extended debates and improve their standards, particularly in media studies.
- Teachers from across the school generally use ICT effectively to improve standards in their own subjects. In physical education, teachers improve pupils' ability to analyse sporting performances through the use of specialist ICT software.
- Good use is made of the support provided by the ICT technical staff.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory.

- All pupils follow a programme of study in ICT that meets statutory requirements.
- Good use is made of ICT in subjects such as geography, mathematics, physical education, modern foreign languages and media studies to improve standards in these subjects. However, not enough account is taken of how pupils' ICT capability can also be improved through their study of other subjects.
- Continuing improvements to the ICT infrastructure are ensuring pupils have greater access to ICT facilities. However, the current ratio of computers to pupils is below the national average and this is slowing the development of ICT in some subjects.
- The Virtual Learning Environment is at an early stage of development although there are innovative plans to work with the community. Currently, pupils' access to the school's ICT materials from home is limited and this restricts their ability to develop their independent learning skills.

Leadership and management of ICT

Leadership of ICT is good.

- With the support of senior leaders, there has been good progress with ICT developments in recent years. There is a clear vision for the development of ICT within the new school buildings. The ICT curriculum is being reviewed and ICT facilities for the new school are being purchased. The school provides good quality professional development for staff in the use of ICT.

Management of ICT is satisfactory.

- There is now a greater emphasis on accurate assessment procedures and the standardisation of levels within the ICT department. This is providing a much more accurate picture of standards and the progress of pupils within discrete ICT provision.
- There is only limited monitoring of pupils' ICT experiences and performance across the school.

Assessment of ICT

Assessment is satisfactory

- Regular assessments are made within discrete ICT lessons. Pupils know their targets for improvement and know how to improve. Good quality marking and informative comments enhance pupils' ICT capability.
- The school is well prepared for the Key Stage 3 ICT on screen test. However, the school was disappointed with this year's results with many pupils achieving at least one level lower than predicted.

Inclusion

All pupils benefit from opportunities to use the school's computers outside of lesson times. This ensures that none are disadvantaged when completing homework or research.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included to:

- review the curriculum model and monitor pupils' ICT experiences across the curriculum
- provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their independent learning skills and extend their ICT capability
- continue to develop the Virtual Learning Environment so that pupils have even greater access to 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

David Cox
Additional Inspector