Ofsted **Better education and care**

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Dear Ms Dalkin

Ofsted survey inspection programme – ICT

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 27-28 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 students, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of students' work and observation of five lessons.

The overall effectiveness of ICT was judged to be satisfactory.

Achievement and standards

Overall achievement and standards are satisfactory.

• The overall standard of attainment in ICT at the end of both key stages is below national averages. However students are now making satisfactory progress in the acquisition and application of ICT skills and knowledge. There are groups of students where progress is good or better for example, those of higher ability and the gifted and talented.

- ICT is having a positive impact on the standards achieved and the attitude to learning by students in other subjects. Students were enjoying their learning in those lessons observed.

Quality of teaching and learning of ICT

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

- The teachers' ICT subject knowledge, competency, ability to apply ICT and quality of teaching in those lessons observed ranged from good to outstanding. Teachers make good use of a range of teaching and learning styles which motivates the students and helps them enjoy their learning.
- ICT is being used well to motivate students' learning in lessons and to enhance the quality of teaching. There is an interactive whiteboard installed in most Faculty areas but overall numbers are low given the size of college. Where they exist, they are being used effectively by staff and students.
- The analysis of students' work and lesson observations show many examples of activities where students are given the freedom and independence to apply ICT creatively. For example, the use of CAD/CAM in design technology, various ICT applications supporting Art and DTP/multimedia presentations in several subject areas.
- Teachers are using ICT well to prepare some high quality teaching and learning resources. Good or outstanding examples of this can be seen in many subjects including; art, mathematics, citizenship, RE, learning support and D&T.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- At Key Stage 3 all the aspects of ICT skills, knowledge and understanding are being covered through discrete ICT lessons and being further developed or consolidated in other subjects.
- Students in the current Year 11 receive two lessons of taught ICT per week and are following a discrete course in ICT leading to a national award. Students in Year 10 are presently not timetabled for discrete ICT and receive their ICT experiences through other subjects. There is no system in place for mapping their experiences or compiling a portfolio of evidence towards any ICT accreditation. All students receive their statutory requirement of ICT.
- Overall the curriculum ensures that students of all ability can experience and take part in a wide range of ICT activities.
- The college is developing well the application of ICT in all subjects and it is being embedded into the planning and schemes of work for all subjects across the college.

- Students make good use of ICT facilities outside of lessons. The college is open four evenings per week to provide courses and access to ICT resources for members of the community.

Leadership and management of ICT

Leadership and management are satisfactory.

- There is a strong commitment from senior leaders to see ICT appropriately integrated and applied in all subjects across the college. Your vision for ICT is commendable but needs to be more formally communicated to staff, parents and governors.
- ICT is generally well led and managed. A deputy headteacher has strategic overview of the subject and ensures there is a strong interface with the aims of the specialist college.
- A good quality self evaluation of ICT exists which clearly outlines the strengths and weaknesses within the subject and accurately identifies the key areas for improvement.
- The operational management of ICT is carried out adequately by a head of department. The school has an internet policy and students and parents sign an agreement prior to accessing the internet or using email. The subject development plan is very lengthy. Target deadlines need to be reviewed as they are currently too unrealistic.
- Staff make good use of the system for recording student performance data.
- Staff and students are making good use of the college intranet. While there is good sharing and dissemination of resources and ideas between staff in the same department, this is not yet well developed across subjects. There is presently no cross curricular working group for ICT.

Assessment of ICT

Assessment is satisfactory

- Systems for recording and assessing students' progress and attainment in ICT are developing well. Teachers assess the students' attainment each term and set end of Key Stage targets for each individual. Although progress towards targets is reviewed by form tutors, not all students are clear about their targets for ICT.
- Procedures for arriving at the end of year levels or final Key Stage 3 assessments are not yet well established or structured. There is a heavy reliance on averaging levels from each unit of work. Work from each of Years 7 to 9 is not saved and there is no compilation of a student portfolio to assist in the final moderation and standardisation of levels at the end of Key Stage 3.
- Students are starting to take part in self review and evaluation of their work and contribute towards assessment judgements but this is at an early stage of development.

Inclusion

- ICT is used well to support and motivate students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and help them make good progress during their time in college. There is an effective learning support department and a separate study centre. Although they have different roles they are both equally well resourced with ICT applications and play a key role in supporting the students' learning and social development.

The SLT has identified very well the main areas for improvement as a result of the self evaluation. This inspection endorses all of the areas listed. In addition,

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- to ensure that the ICT development plan includes realistic and achievable targets
- to ensure that systems for conducting teacher assessment and target setting are consolidated and consistent for all staff
- to continue to develop and broaden the use of the college intranet as a resource for providing and sharing information between subject areas
- to establish a cross curricular ICT working group to enable good practice and strategy to be shared by all staff.

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

Brian Sharples
Her Majesty's Inspector