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Mr D Brodie
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Dear Mr Brodie

Ofsted survey inspection programme – ICT

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on Tuesday 15 November 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 you, your staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of two lessons.

The overall effectiveness of ICT was judged to be outstanding.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in ICT are good.

- Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are improving well and are above the national expectations in ICT, mathematics and for pupils' writing. Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 are able to discuss their experiences

of using ICT articulately and can describe the ways in which ICT helps them to improve their performance for example, in literacy and numeracy.

- Pupils in Year 6 are enthusiastic about the opportunities they have to use ICT in discrete lessons and in other subjects. Their recent World War II presentations demonstrate high standards and a good understanding of audience. Older pupils understand safe working practices when using the internet and can describe carefully the different ways in which they might evaluate their own work and that of others.
- The informed use of ICT is helping to raise standards in many subjects and in reinforcing basic skills in English and mathematics, particularly for boys.
- Teachers assess pupils' progress at the end of every unit of work. Their progress is tracked and monitored carefully to produce an informative profile of achievement. The progress of specific groups of pupils however, is not tracked as effectively as for core subjects.

Quality of teaching and learning of ICT

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

- The quality of teaching and learning in ICT is good with some outstanding features. All staff possess good subject knowledge which enables them to use ICT as a resource to make learning enjoyable and engaging. This in turn helps pupils to develop a wide range of skills and capabilities.
- In the lessons observed, teachers planned well to allow sufficient time for pupils to discuss their ICT work in pairs before sharing this with the whole class. This technique is used widely in the school and is particularly successful in enhancing pupils' speaking and listening skills.
- Teaching assistants provide pupils with good additional support and encourage independence. Good use is made of the final plenary in lessons to enable pupils to evaluate their learning and progress using identified success criteria.
- Pupils work well together and provide one another with effective peer support. There are some excellent examples of the use of digital video and animation by older pupils which demonstrate their independent and creative use of ICT.
- More pupils would benefit from opportunities to develop their higher order ICT skills for example, through more regular exposure to control and data logging activities.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is outstanding.

- The application of ICT is embedded across the whole curriculum. Improvements to the computer network, the use of wireless laptops and increased technical support are enabling teachers to incorporate ICT frequently and reliably within their teaching.
- The revised scheme of work for ICT is used well to ensure continuity and enable good or better progression for all pupils. Curriculum and key stage co-ordinators have a clear understanding of how ICT links with other subjects.
- The use of ICT is extremely effective in enabling pupils in the foundation stage to develop their imagination and creativity from the moment they join the school. Excellent use is made of digital images in the 'Ask Me' project which has led to much improvement in pupils' self confidence and speaking skills.
- Pupils benefit greatly from the involvement of the school in several excellent ICT projects. The joint Aston Pride/DfES project, which enables the school to provide computers in the homes of pupils in Year 3, is being used effectively to engage families in learning and to enhance their ICT skills.

Leadership and management of ICT

Leadership and management of ICT are outstanding.

- You, your staff and governors share a clear strategic vision and passionate commitment for ICT. The leadership and management of ICT is extremely effective and has made a significant impact, demonstrated clearly by the culture of high expectations of pupils and the sustained improvement in the use of ICT.
- All teachers make effective use of their laptop computers and the opportunity to access the computer network remotely. Good attention is paid to continuous professional development in ICT. Staff and those from other local schools, benefit greatly from the training provided by the subject leader which has successfully improved their confidence and enhanced their skills.
- Excellent use is made of ICT to support the school's management, improve the monitoring of pupils' performance in core subjects and enable shared planning.

The impact of ICT on whole-school improvement

- Pupils and their families benefit greatly from the expertise of a governor who is instrumental in promoting the use of ICT to affect improvement both in the school and in the wider community.
- Staff confidence and expertise in using ICT to support learning are very good and improving. There is an expectation that ICT will be used regularly to support learning across all subjects and key stages.
- The school's involvement in external projects is excellent and is enabling greater use of ICT to be made to help raise standards and support school improvement activities.
- Although the senior management team recognise the potential for ICT to contribute to whole school improvement, this vision needs to be more explicit in the school improvement plan.

Inclusion

The provision for inclusion is outstanding.

- The school makes excellent use of ICT resources to support the needs of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities.
- The informed use of ICT is helping pupils, particularly in the foundation stage, to access the curriculum in a way they would otherwise not be able to do.
- ICT is helping to engage and motivate pupils and they say that using ICT helps to make their learning easier and more enjoyable. Boys in particular benefit from the use of stimulating software and interesting ICT activities.

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

- ensure that the planning and teaching of ICT enables specific targets to be set for pupils to enable more of them to develop higher order ICT skills
- extend the use of the effective systems for tracking the progress of specific groups of pupils in core subjects to include ICT
- make the vision to use ICT to affect whole school improvement more explicit in the school improvement plan.

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

Cathy Morgan
Her Majesty's Inspector