

29 January 2007

Mr G Shillinglaw
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Shillinglaw

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Information and
Communication Technology (ICT)

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during
my visit on 25-26 January 2007 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
all staff, including senior and middle managers, discussions with students
from Years 9, 10 and 11, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of
students' work and observation of four lessons.

The overall effectiveness of Information and Communication Technology was
judged to be outstanding.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in ICT are outstanding.

- Students enter the school in Year 9 with low standards in ICT. Through
good teaching in ICT lessons, and the excellent use of ICT in other
subjects, they make outstanding progress. By the end of Year 11
students are achieving standards which are not far from average when
compared with all schools nationally and very high when compared to
similar schools.

- Students enjoy using computers and have very positive attitudes to the subject.

Quality of teaching and learning of ICT

The quality of teaching and learning in ICT is good.

- Teachers have excellent relationships with their students and manage them very well; this encourages and motivates students to want to learn.
- Teachers in all subjects make very good use of interactive whiteboards to help plan and deliver effective lessons.
- Lessons are well planned and teachers set tasks well matched to students' capability.
- More whole-class teaching would help teachers, at the end of lessons, to assess how effective they have been in meeting learning objectives for all students.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- The curriculum ensures that almost all students leave school with appropriate accreditation in ICT.
- There is very good access to computers outside of lesson times.
- Excellent use is made of ICT across a range of subjects, particularly in music, to enhance students' learning and raise standards.
- The lack of provision for data logging in science and CAD/CAM in design technology is preventing students from developing important skills in the use of these applications.

Leadership and management of ICT

The leadership and management of ICT are outstanding.

- Monitoring systems are very good and have resulted in improvements in teaching and learning.
- Technical support is of a high quality.
- The new coordinator has made a positive start in planning improvements in the subject and maintaining a strong team ethos.
- Leadership and management at whole school level are excellent and have delivered outstanding achievement in ICT for the school's students.

Assessment of ICT and the readiness of the school for the onscreen Key Stage 3 ICT test

Assessment is good.

- In lessons, students are given good individual feedback on how well they are doing and how they can improve.
- Targets are set, but these are not based on students' prior attainment in ICT.
- The excellent use of interactive whiteboards at the end of every lesson to assess and record how well students have met their individual targets, is a valuable tool in helping students improve their work and sustaining positive attitudes.
- The school is well prepared for the ICT on-screen test.

Inclusion

There is very good access to computers outside of lesson times for all groups of students. A good range of software helps students with low level literacy skills to make good progress.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included to:

- assess students' standards in ICT at the beginning of Year 9 and inform teachers of individual student's capability in ICT
- improve the teaching of ICT further by including a greater focus on whole class teaching and a clearer understanding of what students are expected to have learnt by the end of each lesson.

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

Joe Clark
Additional Inspector