Ofsted **Better education and care**

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Dear Mr Birbeck

Ofsted survey inspection programme – ICT

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 8-9 February 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 good.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in ICT are good.

- Pupils make outstanding progress in Years 5 to 7 and by the end of Year 7 their standards of ICT are very high. In Year 8, pupils use ICT extensively in many subjects although they do not progress their ICT capability as quickly as they have in previous years. This is because they do not have discrete ICT lessons in Year 8.
- Pupils have an excellent knowledge of presentation techniques which they use effectively to improve their work. They understand the principles that underpin different software applications and apply these well to improve their standards in ICT. All pupils know how to create databases and spreadsheet models.

- The development of pupils' ICT capability across the curriculum is good. In English, pupils use digital cameras to video their performance of a short speech. This is helping them to improve their standards of characterisation and also to develop the skills of being a 'Director' behind the camera. Pupils improve their standards in art and design by using ICT painting packages to produce self-portraits and experiment with tone and light.
- Pupils' personal development is excellent. They enjoy their ICT lessons and develop very good independent learning skills. From Year 5 onwards, pupils are able to choose which software to use for a specific task.

Quality of teaching and learning of ICT

The quality of teaching and learning in ICT is outstanding.

- The specialist ICT teaching observed was outstanding. Teachers provide pupils with exciting activities. The software packages have been adapted to suit the needs of pupils of all abilities. This is an important factor in supporting pupils' excellent progress in Years 5 to 7.
- There are examples of outstanding teaching in other subjects as seen in English, art and design and mathematics. Teachers plan their lessons very well, taking account of pupils' previous attainment. Teachers make very effective use of the interactive whiteboards to engage pupils and to illustrate different ICT applications.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are outstanding. Teachers encourage pupils to ask questions and to give informative comments about their own and other pupils' work.
- Very good use is made of the support provided by the ICT technical staff.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- All pupils follow a programme of study in ICT that meets statutory requirements. The curriculum in Years 5 to 7 is very good. Schemes of work have been modified to suit the needs of pupils. Activities are interesting and motivate pupils.
- Very good use is made of ICT in subjects such as geography, art and design, English, physical education and science to improve standards in these subjects.
- In Year 8, although pupils use ICT extensively within other subjects, their ICT capability is not improved as rapidly as that in Years 5 to 7.

- Pupils have good access to school based ICT materials through the school web site. This extends their learning beyond the classroom. Pupils make extensive use of the school's ICT facilities at break times and lunchtimes.

Leadership and management of ICT

Leadership and management of ICT are good.

- The subject leader of ICT, along with senior leaders, provides good leadership and has helped pupils to achieve well. Leaders have already identified that pupils' ICT progress is not as good in Year 8 and are reviewing the curriculum.

Assessment of ICT

Assessment is good.

- There are extensive assessment procedures in Years 5 to 7 that support pupils' progress. Pupils' progress is monitored well. Pupils are encouraged to comment on their own work and that of other pupils. Pupils know their targets for improvement and know how to improve. Good quality marking and informative comments enhance pupils' ICT capability.
- The school has recognised that assessment procedures in Year 8 are not as secure as those in other years and are investigating different methods of assessing pupils.

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. The learning support department uses ICT effectively to motivate and improve pupils' standards.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included to:

- review ICT provision in Year 8 in order to improve pupils' ICT capability
- review and improve assessment procedures in Year 8.

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