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Mr D Walsh
St James' Church of England
Voluntary Controlled Primary School
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Dear Mr Walsh

Ofsted survey inspection programme of primary schools 2007/8
Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 2 October 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 impact of ICT 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 staff and learners, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and the observation of lessons in Years 1/2 and 5/6.

The overall effectiveness of ICT was judged to be satisfactory.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in ICT are satisfactory.

- Pupils make satisfactory progress in ICT throughout the school and by the end of Year 6 most pupils are at the nationally expected levels.
- Pupils with learning disabilities and difficulties are well supported with their work in ICT and achieve well.
- Learning activities are insufficiently challenging for some of the more able pupils and these pupils could make better progress.
- Use of ICT in other subject areas is inconsistent though generally improving.
- Pupils enjoy their work in ICT, collaborate well together and are well motivated by the use of ICT resources.

Quality of teaching and learning of ICT

The quality of teaching and learning in ICT is satisfactory.

- Teachers' ICT subject knowledge is inconsistent.
- In some lessons, learning activities do not meet the needs of the more able pupils as they lack opportunities to achieve the higher National Curriculum levels.
- All teachers make use of interactive whiteboards to enhance teaching and learning. .
- Some ICT work is assessed to National Curriculum levels and pupils also do some self assessment of the ICT skills that they have developed.

Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum in ICT is satisfactory.

- The ICT lessons are based on the QCA national units of work. This ensures that most of the ICT programme of study is covered.
- There are no opportunities for pupils to use analogue sensors and data logging although the school does have the resources.
- The units of work are insufficiently well adapted to meet the learning needs of all pupils.
- ICT is well used to support work in some subject areas but there are missed opportunities for pupils to develop their ICT capability in others.

Leadership and management of ICT

The leadership and management of ICT are satisfactory.

- Around the time of your involvement in the SLICT training programme, around four years ago you invested quite heavily in new ICT infrastructure and resources.
- The reliability of these resources has been poor and this has undermined the confidence of some staff to use ICT to its full potential.
- The level of technical support has been insufficient to resolve all the issues of reliability and the efficiency of the curriculum network.
- All the staff have had training in the use of interactive whiteboards though their confidence in their use is variable.
- There are robust systems in place for the monitoring and assessment of pupils work in ICT.
- You are aware of the need for renewing and updating the curricular ICT systems and an up to date action plan is in place with sensible priorities identified.

Subject issue - the impact of ICT on whole-school improvement

The impact of ICT on whole-school improvement is satisfactory.

- The unreliability of the curriculum network has limited the impact of ICT on standards and achievement.
- The administrative system is much more reliable and good use has been made of it to analyse pupils' performance, track progress and intervene effectively.
- The use of ICT systems has supported the school well in addressing the issue of under achievement of higher attaining pupils in Mathematics.

Inclusion

The use of ICT to support underachieving and vulnerable groups of pupils is good.

- Children with learning difficulties and disabilities enjoy their work in ICT and make good progress.
- The monitoring systems work well to identify those pupils in need of extra help and support in the subject and intervention is effective.
- Teaching assistants and adult volunteer helpers are well used to support pupils during ICT lessons.

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

- urgently renew and replace the curriculum ICT systems
- improve planning to ensure that learning activities provide more challenge for pupils
- provide more opportunities for the higher attaining pupils to achieve the higher National Curriculum levels
- provide further professional development for staff to improve their ICT subject knowledge
- ensure that Key Stage 2 pupils are able to develop their skills in the use of sensing and data logging resources.

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 the Ofsted website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Ralph Lilley
Additional Inspector