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Mr J Murray
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Dear Mr Murray

Ofsted survey inspection programme – ICT

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 14 March 2008 to look at work in ICT.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the subject, 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 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 in ICT

Achievement and standards are good.

- Pupils make good progress from their low starting points because of good teaching. By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6, ICT standards of attainment are broadly average.
- Pupils use ICT effectively to communicate their ideas. They take account of different audiences when producing presentations. These presentations often include photographs, clipart images and sounds.
- Pupils use the technical language of the subject well to describe their ICT activities. Younger pupils understand terms such as 'cell reference' and 'formula bar' when referring to spreadsheets.

- Good use is made of ICT to improve standards of attainment in other subjects. For example, in mathematics, pupils use a spreadsheet model to explore the relationship between the perimeter and the area of a shape.
- Pupils' knowledge and understanding of data logging techniques is less secure because there are few opportunities for them to investigate how they might be used.
- Pupils' personal development is good. From an early age, pupils are encouraged to work together and share their ideas. Older pupils use ICT confidently to present their work to the whole class.

Quality of teaching and learning of ICT

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

- Well organised ICT activities enable pupils to make good progress with the development of their basic ICT skills. Teachers plan tasks that are well matched to the needs of pupils.
- Classroom support assistants are used effectively and play a major part in lessons. As a result of good quality professional development, they have a good knowledge of how ICT can be used to support pupils with learning difficulties.
- Specialist ICT teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of software applications. They demonstrate the more advanced features of software effectively which enables more able pupils to make good progress.
- The use of interactive white boards to improve pupils' learning is inconsistent. Whilst there is good practice, more often than not they are used only to display the desired learning outcomes or a prepared slide presentation and fail to engage pupils.

Quality of the curriculum for ICT

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- The school meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum for ICT fully. However, data logging is covered only superficially.
- Good curriculum links with a local secondary school ensure pupils have access to the systems and control element of ICT.
- In most subjects, ICT is used effectively to improve standards of attainment. In science, younger pupils use ICT to learn about the different parts of the human body. However, pupils do not use electronic devices to enhance their work in music.

Leadership and management of ICT

Leadership and management are good.

- The management of ICT is good. Resources are well looked after and there is a rolling programme for the replacement of equipment. Documentation about the operational management of ICT is extensive.

Areas for improvement have been identified and a clear plan of action established.
- You have a clear vision for the development of ICT although this is not shared by all staff.

Impact of ICT on whole school improvement

The school is making effective use of ICT in order to improve standards of attainment across the school, particularly in literacy, mathematics and science.

Inclusion

The subject's contribution to the inclusion of pupils is good.

- The school makes good use of ICT to support those pupils who have learning difficulties and /or disabilities. Classroom support assistants are well versed in making the most effective use of ICT.
- Specialist software applications support lower attaining pupils. Software programs are helping to improve pupils' reading skills.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- providing pupils with a wider range of experiences of data logging
- ensuring all staff are more conversant with the capabilities for improving pupils' learning through the use of the interactive white boards
- ensuring there is a shared, coherent strategy agreed by all staff for the development of ICT across the school.

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

David Cox
Additional Inspector