05 March 2008

Mrs V Hayles
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Dear Mrs Hayles

Ofsted survey inspection programme – ICT

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 29 February 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 learners, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of lessons.

The overall effectiveness of ICT was judged to be satisfactory.

Achievement and standards in ICT

Achievements and standards in ICT are satisfactory.

- By the end of Year 6, pupils' standards of attainment in ICT are above average. Pupils achieve well within the relatively narrow experience of ICT provided. However, the highly structured teaching and limited curriculum range inhibit pupils' potential to develop more independent learning and this restricts their ability to use ICT widely.
- Pupils have an above average knowledge and understanding of modelling techniques. They are confident users of databases and older pupils are able to describe the purpose of a database.

- Pupils' knowledge of systems and control and, datalogging is less secure because they have limited opportunities to learn about these techniques.

Quality of teaching and learning of ICT

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

- Whilst the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, there are examples of good teaching.
- Specialist ICT teachers have extensive knowledge and understanding of their subject. ICT activities are highly structured and pupils use a limited range of software. This approach enables pupils to gain a good knowledge of the more advanced features of the selected software but prevents them from acquiring an understanding of how ICT is developing and impacting on the wider world.
- Occasionally, activities are uninspiring and there is little sense of enjoyment.
- Teachers from across the curriculum have a variable understanding of how to use ICT to improve standards within their own subjects.
- Assessment procedures are satisfactory. There is good use of pupil self-assessment and pupils know how well they are doing. Exemplars of good ICT practice are not used to show pupils how they might improve their work.

Quality of the curriculum for ICT

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory.

- The school meets fully the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum for ICT. Areas such as information modelling and data handling are taught in depth and enable pupils to meet the criteria to reach higher levels in these strands of ICT.
- Pupils have access to a narrow range of ICT experiences and software. ICT is not fully embedded across the curriculum. This limits pupils' abilities to make choices when deciding how best to approach an ICT activity.
- Pupils have limited access to the school's ICT facilities outside of normal school hours. This restricts their ability to carry out research and to investigate how ICT might be best used to enhance their work.

Leadership and management of ICT

Leadership and management are satisfactory.

- The management of ICT is good. Resources are of good quality and are well looked after. Documentation about the operational management of ICT is extensive. Good quality professional development is enabling staff to keep abreast of the latest ICT developments within the school.

- The leadership of ICT is satisfactory. You have already identified how ICT might be used more effectively to drive up whole-school standards. However, there is not yet a shared, coherent strategy agreed by all staff for the development of ICT across the school.

Impact of ICT on whole school improvement

Standards are continuing to rise across the school but leaders are unable to measure the contribution ICT is making to this trend.

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 disabilities. Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils and use ICT effectively to improve pupils' basic skills.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- ensuring pupils have access to a much wider ICT curriculum that inspires them
- ensuring there is a more coherent approach to the development of ICT in order to drive up standards across the school
- ensuring pupils know how to improve their ICT work.

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