02 April 2008

Mrs J R Strong
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Dear Mrs Strong

Ofsted survey inspection programme – ICT

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 01 April 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 two lessons, scrutiny of school website and virtual learning environment.

The overall effectiveness of ICT was judged to be outstanding.

Achievement and standards in ICT

Achievement and standards are outstanding

- When they start school pupils' skills are well below those typical for their age. Concerted work by staff to raise standards and make sure all pupils achieve as well as they can is highly successful. Good teaching and regular lessons develop pupils' ICT capability, and by the end of Year 2 standards are broadly average. This rapid progress continues throughout Key Stage 2 so by the end of Year 6 standards are well above average. School data and inspection evidence show that almost

all pupils achieve at least one level above the nationally expected level 4. This represents outstanding achievement from a very low starting point.

- Pupils are enthusiastic and enjoy using ICT to enrich their learning. Timetabled lessons each week to develop their skills and apply them means they become confident, independent ICT users. For instance, making slide shows to retell the story of Christmas or explain about life in Ancient Greece. Some highly innovative work uses ICT to make meaningful links with literacy. Pupils in Year 4/5 record and edit podcasts of their interview with a paramedic, before uploading them to the 'news' section of the school website. It is activities such as these that make learning come alive for pupils because they give them an excellent opportunity to develop literacy skills and empower them to use the latest technology in their learning.

- In lessons pupils concentrate extremely well, share ideas and are eager to help one another. Behaviour is exemplary and pupils are eager to talk about their work. When asked to share folders of their work on the school network Year 6 pupils show obvious pride, enthusiasm and, for example, their use of technical language about graphical modelling or morphing images is often outstanding.

Quality of teaching and learning of ICT

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

- Teachers are confident with good subject knowledge. They are enthusiastic with a clear understanding of how ICT enriches learning and what skills their pupils need to have. However, there is sometimes insufficient attempt made to provide activities that are targeted at pupils of different ability levels. Thorough planning, for ICT lessons and its use in different subjects, is evaluated and in turn makes sure that lessons are purposeful and catch pupils' interest.

- All teachers make very good use of computer whiteboards to present lessons, for instance, to develop pupils' skills to write instructions for an on-screen robot 'bee' to locate treasure on a desert island. They routinely provide pupils with chances to enrich learning using laptop computers in classrooms or to work as a class in the computer suite. This gives them excellent opportunities to research and consolidate learning independently using well chosen software or internet sites.

- Assessment of pupils' ICT work is developing very well. Currently each unit of work is assessed and pupils receive guidance about improving it. This gives teachers a clear indication of overall progress with outcomes analysed carefully and used to develop lesson content. However, the school is aware that this approach records individual pupil's progress and targets less thoroughly than it could so plans are in hand to develop it in the near future.

Quality of the curriculum for ICT

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- All pupils enjoy three one hour lessons each week in the ICT suite, to learn skills, apply them across the curriculum and use applications to extend their understanding, for example in mathematics. This regular provision is enhanced by an after school computer club and enrichment activities for gifted and talented pupils.
- Thorough plans are informed by the government's recommended ICT scheme of work. This makes sure that pupils develop the ICT skills they should to research, analyse and present information in text, data and pictures. However, the school's evaluation identifies and the inspector agrees that there is sometimes insufficient attempt made to provide activities targeted for pupils of different abilities.

Leadership and management of ICT

Leadership and management are outstanding.

- Your excellent vision and drive to improve standards has developed an excellent team of staff, supported by school governors, who are enthusiastic and work together very well to enrich all pupils' learning using ICT. Clear plans, regular and accurate evaluation and updates show clearly how development in the last two years has improved provision and raised standards. You and your staff have a very clear understanding and proposed direction for the continued development of ICT provision.
- The subject co-ordinator and technician have a very good grasp of the practical actions required to develop provision and seek out innovation. They are supported extremely well by teachers with specific ICT expertise, for example in website design. Excellent documentation underpins demonstrable outcomes in lessons. Equally effective is the support from the technician / teaching assistant whose role includes teaching pupils, developing the school's virtual learning environment and making sure the network and computers work well.

Impact of ICT on whole school improvement

There is a good impact of ICT on whole school improvement.

- Outstanding leadership, very clear plans, regular lessons and demonstrable improvement to provision make ICT central to learning throughout the school. This has a positive impact on pupils' motivation, learning and standards in ICT and other subjects. Regular use of ICT to present lessons and provide pupils with the tools to enrich their learning increases their motivation and makes their learning come alive.
- Well-planned support and regular staff training enables the school to move forward extremely well on its journey to embed ICT fully into all aspects of its work.

Inclusion

- Inclusion is good. All pupils including those with learning difficulties and disabilities take a full part in lessons. Access to ICT in classrooms and suite is excellent. Knowledgeable and confident teaching assistants provide pupils with extra support and they make comparable progress to their peers. Lessons seen during the inspection appealed equally to boys and girls.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- improving the assessment system to track and record individual pupils' progress more thoroughly
- providing more lesson activities for pupils of different ability levels.

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

Michael Haynes
Additional Inspector