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Dear Miss Jamieson

Ofsted survey inspection programme – ICT

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit with Keith Wilkinson on 19 May 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 quality of assessment.

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 discussion with some of the staff and two groups of pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and the observation of two part lessons.

The overall effectiveness of ICT was judged to be satisfactory.

Achievement and standards in ICT

Achievement and standards are satisfactory and improving.

- Standards are beginning to rise as a result of the school's investment in training for teaching and support staff.
- Standards are broadly average and are improving more rapidly at Key Stage 1 than in Key Stage 2. This is partly due to gaps in pupils learning at Key Stage 2 and their variable experiences.
- There is greater use of ICT to help reinforce basic skills and raise standards in mathematics than there is in English.

- The school has yet to embed a system of target setting to support the drive towards raising standards in ICT.
- The school tracks and monitors the progress made by different groups and this shows that pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities progress as well as their peers and some achieve even better thanks to the high quality of additional support the school provides.
- ICT makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' personal development and well-being.
- Younger pupils are aware of the importance of not having liquid next to electrical equipment. Older pupils show an awareness of their personal safety when using the internet.

Quality of teaching and learning of ICT

The quality of teaching and learning of ICT is satisfactory.

- Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and are confident in their use of ICT.
- Teachers make effective use of interactive whiteboards to provide good demonstrations at the start of lessons. However, key vocabulary is not always sufficiently well taught and as a result pupils struggle at times to use the correct terminology when talking about the work they are doing in ICT.
- Teachers make effective use of questions to help pupils recall and build on previous learning; however, there are missed opportunities for pupils to share and discuss their work and what they are learning in pairs or in small groups.
- Although some of the older pupils benefit from working on their own at a computer this is not always beneficial to younger pupils who require a range of strategies to help them to work successfully without the constant support of an adult.
- ICT enables younger pupils in Reception to be creative and express themselves visually in a way that exceeds their ability to communicate verbally.
- Older pupils enjoy opportunities to undertake research and work independently.
- Additional adults support the needs of pupils with learning difficulties well, particularly those who are language impaired. These pupils benefit very well from ICT because they are able to use technology to visually depict what they wish to communicate in a way they would not otherwise be able to do. A good example is the use of the interactive whiteboard by pupils to demonstrate how they have worked out a mathematical problem about fractions.
- The ICT coordinator has correctly identified the need to provide additional challenge for more able pupils.
- There are some inconsistencies in the quality of ICT provision for pupils throughout the school.

Quality of the curriculum for ICT

The quality of the curriculum for ICT is satisfactory.

- The school has a well planned curriculum for ICT which promotes adequate levels of continuity and progression.
- There are satisfactory and improving links between ICT and other subjects; however, at times these links mean that pupils are provided with work which is not entirely suitable for their age.
- Although the curriculum covers the programmes of study, pupils' experiences are at times restricted by the limited range of resources. For example, there are limited opportunities for the school to use ICT to support the needs of some of the lower attaining boys in Years 1 and 2.

Leadership and management of ICT

Leadership and management of ICT are satisfactory.

- The ICT coordinator has worked hard to ensure the school has an ICT suite that is fit for purpose and that the staff are confident and competent users of ICT.
- The school has not produced a written vision for ICT and recognises that it has a long way to go before it can say that the work in ICT is innovative.
- The policies for ICT as well as the safe use of the internet have recently been updated and there is an adequate action plan for improving ICT in the school. However, this does not include sufficient detail about how the ICT coordinator intends to raise standards and increase rates of progress.
- There is a link governor for ICT and the ICT coordinator evaluates his area of responsibility annually; however, this evaluation is not sharply focussed on standards and progress or the progress made by different groups. Consequently the evaluation is not rigorous enough to ensure the school has a clear and accurate view of how well it is performing in ICT.
- Although ICT is included within the remit of other subject leaders, it does not feature sufficiently on the action plans for other subjects.

Use of Assessment

The quality and use of assessment in ICT are satisfactory.

- Opportunities for pupils to review and evaluate their work are adequate and improving; however, there are too few opportunities for them to do this during the course of a lesson.
- The school is developing assessment procedures for ICT, but these have yet to be consistently well embedded throughout the school.
- Teachers are beginning to make effective use of targets, but this information is not used equally well throughout the school to inform the next steps in teaching.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- ensuring there is a sharp enough focus on progress and standards in planning, monitoring and evaluating ICT
- ensuring there is good use of assessment strategies during lessons to enable pupils to evaluate and improve their work
- embedding the use of target setting throughout the school
- continuing to invest in ICT to ensure there is a good range of hardware and software for use across the curriculum and more creative use of ICT to support and enhance learning.

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

Gehane Gordelier
Her Majesty's Inspector