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Mrs L Regan
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Dear Mrs Regan

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Information communication and technology (ICT)

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 12 June 2008 with Clive Barnett HMI 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 discussions with pupils and staff, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observations of a lunchtime ICT club and three part lessons.

The overall effectiveness of ICT was judged to be good and is becoming increasingly outstanding.

Achievement and standards in ICT

Achievement and standards in ICT are good.

- The progress that pupils make in all phases is at least good. This is leading to standards, which are above average for their age by the end of the Reception year and Years 2 and 6.
- Pupils make good use of ICT in other subjects and this is leading to high standards and accelerated rates of progress particularly in science.

- The small number of pupils with learning difficulties and/ or disabilities benefit from using ICT to help them to progress as well as their peers.
- Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe when using technology. When in Year 5 they produce posters about internet safety.
- The school is very successful at helping pupils to become independent in their use of ICT. This is because pupils are provided with good opportunities to explore and use a wide range of software. Pupils are also encouraged to make choices about how and when to use ICT to support their learning.
- ICT makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal development and well-being. Pupils quickly learn to take turns and enjoy helping each other. The use of the internet further extends their education about other cultures and faiths.
- Pupils state that ICT helps to make learning fun and interesting. However, some of the higher attaining pupils would welcome even more challenge especially in Year 6.

Quality of teaching and learning of ICT

The quality of teaching and learning of ICT are good.

- There are pockets of outstanding practise in the school especially in the use of the interactive whiteboard (IWB) to engage and motivate pupils and demonstrate new learning.
- Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and are confident and competent users of a broad range of hardware and software.
- Where teaching is outstanding, it helps pupils to apply a range of skills and knowledge gained in ICT and developed in other subjects. They work well collaboratively and are creative in their work. In an excellent lesson in Year 4, pupils were learning how to produce a pod cast. They worked in pairs, with one pupil acting as a reporter and the other as 'an animal that was being interviewed'. Pupils had planned their questions and answers from the work about habitats in science. Pupils learnt how to layer and modify sounds and how to add sound effects. The lesson helped pupils to develop their ICT skills, while consolidating their learning in science. The lesson also supported the deployment of pupils' writing as well as their speaking and listening skills. All the work was undertaken with great enthusiasm. The adults in the lesson helped to extend pupils learning very well and encouraged them to make use of the helpful prompt card when needed.
- Whiteboards are used very well in an interactive manner. In a good introductory part of a lesson in Year 2, pupils were invited to come up to the IWB to uncover part of a picture of the fire of London or select a sound file. Pupils were then encouraged to describe what they could see and hear and explain how they believed it fitted in with the picture.
- Where teaching is not always of an equally high standard, there are missed opportunities for teachers to use mini plenaries to ensure that all pupils are sufficiently focused on the learning objective and the purpose of the lesson.

- Additional adults provide pupils with very effective support. This is done in a way that promotes independent learning and helps pupils to develop the skill they require to help themselves.
- Older pupils would welcome more opportunities to show and share their work with the whole class.
- Teaching and support staff ensure that pupils with learning difficulties and / or disabilities receive the support and guidance they require. This is because support staff have a good understanding of pupils' personal targets and how ICT can be used to help meet pupils' needs. A good example was seen in Year 1 with pupils being encouraged to sound out spellings when they used a laptop to write about a photograph of themselves and a member of their family.

Quality of the curriculum for ICT

The quality of the curriculum for ICT is good.

- The curriculum is well planned and clarifies progression in skills from one year to the next.
- The school has a well-devised programme of work; however, it would benefit from being reviewed to include additional challenge for the higher attaining pupils.
- The school has correctly identified the benefits of further diversifying the range of hardware and software applications and introducing more use of animation.
- The ICT curriculum provides good opportunities for pupils to be creative in their work. It meets the interests of learners very well and contributes very effectively to their enjoyment of learning.
- There are good and improving cross-curricular links. A good example is with pupils in Year 3 searching for and then downloading pictures from the internet about to Egypt. These young pupils had copied and pasted images into a word processing document to which they subsequently added text.

Leadership and management of ICT

The leadership and management of ICT are good.

- You and the link governor provide good support to the ICT manager.
- The vision for ICT is understood and embraced by staff and governors.
- The ICT manager tracks and monitors the progress of all pupils and is quick to identify pupils at risk of underachieving. She works closely with staff to ensure that the targets set for pupils in ICT are challenging.
- The ICT manager has a clear and accurate view of the strengths and areas which could be further improved. However, information about the quality of teaching and learning in ICT and its impact on progress and standards and are not reported formally to the school or governing body, and action plans do not focus sharply enough on the intended outcomes for pupils.

- Teaching and support staff have received high quality training provided by the ICT manager. This has helped them to become confident and highly competent users of ICT.
- The ICT manager has provided good support to colleagues by working alongside them, but she has not had the opportunity to undertake formal lesson observations.

Use of Assessment

The use of assessment in the subject is good.

- Teachers assess pupils' levels at the end of every unit of work and this helps to inform the review of pupils' targets during the course of the year.
- Pupils are encouraged to self and peer assess and this helps them to support each other's work very well during lessons.
- Pupils in Key Stage 2 know their targets for ICT and appreciate the guidance they receive from their teachers about how they can improve their work.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- reviewing the curriculum so that it includes further challenge and enrichment opportunities for the higher attaining pupils
- developing the role of the ICT manager to include lesson observations and a more formal approach to recording and reporting on the quality of teaching and learning and its impact on progress and standards.

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 diocesan board. It 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