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Mrs Dudley
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Dudley

Ofsted subject survey: good practice in ICT

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 11 June 2008 to look at work in ICT.

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 without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included: discussions with you, students, the ICT co-ordinator and the inclusion manager, a lesson observation, scrutiny of ICT work and relevant paperwork.

Features of good practice observed

Oakwood School and Young Persons' Centre is located at Sheffield Hospital. The school has residential and day students who transfer to the school with complex health issues. The number on roll varies but is usually around 25. The school caters for students aged between 11 and 16. The vast majority of students transfer from and to main stream education. The school was identified as demonstrating best practice in the use of ICT in the promotion of inclusion. The school was runner up in the BECTA Excellence Award for secondary inclusion in 2007.

There is a clear and articulate vision for ICT at Oakwood School. ICT is there to: develop the self esteem of the students, provide them with experiences which will improve their life chances, build on their interests and needs and provide them with the opportunity to become computer literate citizens of the 21st Century. This vision is embraced by all members of staff. The school

intranet site provides each student with their own web pages. These are regularly updated and used by the students to develop their communication skills. They are also used by new students to find things out about other students; this enables students to make friends more easily. The website also encourages the students to take ownership of their work. However the safety of the students on the internet is paramount and all staff are aware of the need to ensure students' safety.

Good teaching in ICT enables the students to work at their own level. The good teaching is enhanced by the excellent relationships between the staff and the students. Students appreciate the way the staff care about them as individuals as well as about their academic progress. The curriculum includes work on spreadsheets and databases as well as presenting information. Students especially enjoy creating videos and animation films and this work gives the students the opportunity to work together. Students are also given the opportunity to complete accredited courses. The skills students are learning are contributing to their future economic well-being.

Staff participate in good professional development. Staff have development targets for ICT and all are encouraged to use interactive whiteboards and other aspects of ICT, particularly digital cameras. The good technical backup means staff are prepared to take risks with ICT and embed it into their everyday practice.

ICT is also used to provide a holistic overview of each student's progress. A simple but effective tracking system is in place to monitor students' behaviour. Clinical review sheets and academic progress sheets are in place and easily accessible.

Oakwood is sharing its good practice of using ICT to develop inclusion through the Acorn Group. This group takes 16 vulnerable Key Stage 3 students from local schools for two half days a week each term. By using film making and animation techniques the students develop their communication skills, work with others and enhance their self esteem.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop ICT in the school.

As I explained previously, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be published on Ofsted's website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Tanya Harber Stuart
Her Majesty's Inspector