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Mrs B Towse
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Dear Mrs Towse

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 10 June 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 use of assessment to improve pupils' ICT capability.

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 ICT lessons in Years 2 and 6.

The overall effectiveness of ICT was judged to be satisfactory.

Achievement and standards in ICT

Achievement and standards in ICT are satisfactory and improving and ICT is contributing well to pupils' personal development and well-being.

- Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with national expectations in the presentation strand of ICT. By the end of Year 6 standards in information handling, sensing and control are a little below national expectations.
- Achievement by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is satisfactory.

- Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported by teaching assistants and make generally good progress.
- The use of ICT has a positive impact on attainment in other subjects.
- Pupils enjoy their work in ICT. They collaborate well when needed and are able to make sensible peer evaluations of their work. They use the internet in a safe and responsible manner.

Quality of teaching and learning of ICT

The quality of teaching and learning in ICT is satisfactory with some good features.

- Teachers plan well to meet the needs of most learners. Learning activities are well differentiated and pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported in their independent work by learning support assistants and parent helpers.
- Pupils respond well to learning activities in ICT. They apply good levels of effort to their work and are well motivated when using the computers.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is improving and this is reflected in more confident and wide spread use of ICT across the curriculum.
- For some higher attaining pupils in Years 5 and 6 the learning activities are insufficiently challenging for them to attain the higher national curriculum levels.
- Marking is not clear enough to inform pupils accurately about how well they are doing and what they can do to improve their work further.
- Learning support assistants and parent helpers are used well to facilitate successful independent work in ICT lessons.
- Teachers modify learning activities well to make them accessible to pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and for the lower attaining pupils.
- Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported in their work in ICT.

Quality of the curriculum for ICT

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory.

- Modified national guidance is followed as the basis for a scheme of work that covers the National Curriculum programme of study. Although pupils experience all the areas of the ICT curriculum, work in the presentation strand predominates and there is insufficient emphasis on the other areas.
- ICT is widely used across the curriculum and is contributing to raising standards in other subjects. Some opportunities to develop ICT capability across the curriculum are currently being missed. This is because the planning for the use of ICT in other subject areas is not detailed enough and some curriculum links are missing such as data logging in science.

- By the end of Year 6 the opportunities for some higher attaining pupils to develop their information handling, sensing and control skills is limited by the design of the learning activities.

Leadership and management of ICT

Leadership and management of ICT are good and recent improvements due to good shared vision and strong subject leadership are evident.

- A new, purpose built ICT room is well designed to provide good access to computers and flexible use of the new space that has been created. You explained the plans for the school to be involved in an authority-wide learning platform initiative to improve provision further.
- Enthusiastic leadership has been successful in improving the quality of ICT teaching across the school by auditing training needs and providing appropriate professional development for colleagues.
- Subject planning and documentation is thorough and up to date. Policies are reviewed annually and the school has used the national self-review framework as a tool to support self evaluation and to inform ICT planning.
- The local authority support services have been used well to aid ICT developments by providing technical support and advice. Good value for money has been established through careful procurement of hardware and sensible use of e-learning credits to provide a wide range of software and educational content for the network.

The use of assessment to improve pupils' ICT capability

The use of assessment to improve pupils' ICT capability is inadequate.

- Although pupils' coverage of the ICT scheme of work is currently monitored, the use of assessment to improve their capability in ICT is insufficiently developed.
- Some end-of-unit assessment takes place but pupils are not always clear about how well they are doing in ICT and how they could improve their work further.
- There has been little attempt so far to link the use of ICT across the curriculum with raising attainment in other subjects, though good achievement in the core subjects is partly attributable to the impact of learning with ICT.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- improving the quality of assessment to raise attainment in ICT
- improving planning for the use of ICT to raise attainment in other subjects
- increasing the challenge in learning activities for higher attaining junior pupils particularly in the areas of information handling, sensing and control.

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,

Ralph Lilley
Additional Inspector