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Mrs Jones
Headteacher
Piper Hill High School
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Dear Mrs Jones

Ofsted subject survey: good practice in information communication and technology (ICT)

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 3 July 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, lesson observations, scrutiny of ICT work and relevant paperwork.

Features of good practice observed

- Piper Hill is a special school located in the south west of Manchester. The school caters for students with significant learning difficulties, including students with profound and multiple learning difficulties and challenging behaviour. The students are aged between 11 and 19. The levels the students are working at ranges from pivit levels to GCSE. There are 110 students on roll. The school was identified as having best practice in the use of ICT in the promotion of inclusion. The school won the BECTA Excellence Award for secondary inclusion in 2007. Piper Hill is a mathematics and computing specialist college.
- The vision for ICT at Piper Hill is clear and consistently articulated by all staff. ICT is seen to have a central role in enhancing the learning environment for the students. The senior leadership team, ably lead by the head teacher, makes decisions about the use of ICT based on the

learning needs of the students. This means the resources purchased are fully embedded into teaching and learning. For example students working at P1 and P2 use large buttons to control and respond to events. ICT is also supporting these students' visual development. More able students complete a range of activities including spreadsheets, computer animation and web-sites. Some students are entered for entry level qualifications at Key Stage 4 and attain level one. The use of digital cameras to create displays enlivens the learning environment and engages the students in the life of the school. This innovative and responsive use of ICT across the school and for all students develops their self-esteem.

- The development of ICT at the school is enhanced by the versatile technical team. This team is an integral part of the school team. It ensures the system is working and supports members of staff through team teaching and ICT training. The training is provided during induction and when new resources are purchased. Training needs are also identified through performance management and then catered for.
- The school is fully aware of the need to educate students in the use of ICT to enable them to participate in the modern world and ensure they stay safe. Students are aware of the dangers of computer viruses and the precautions they need to take when using the internet. Students also benefit from taking laptops home.
- Members of staff benefit from the computerised planning and target setting system. This means all staff, teachers and teaching assistants, are able to access all the documents so they are fully informed about the students they teach and support. This saves staff time and effort and enhances their work-life balance. The system allows staff to share good practice and has improved the standards of planning and teaching and learning. This excellent knowledge about each and every student means all students are supported and develop their learning regardless of their ability. Leaders and managers are able to monitor easily the planning and also the progress students are making. Parents are fully informed.
- The school council is fully involved in the development of ICT. They have evaluated programs and this has led to the school working towards creating their own. The school is determined that the resources used are appropriate to the students and their lives. The school council has also negotiated the purchase of ICT licences. They are working on developing a school council web-site. Other students have used ICT to develop simple, but very effective, systems for monitoring their own behaviour.
- Ensuring all students have appropriate ICT provision is given a high priority by the senior leadership of the school. This makes an excellent contribution to their achievement.

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