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Mr M Bartleman  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Bartleman

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

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 5 November 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 discussions with staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of two part lessons.

The overall effectiveness of ICT was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards in ICT

Achievement in ICT is good and standards are above average by the end of Year 6.

- Although improving rapidly, pupils make better progress in ICT at Key Stage 2 than at Key Stage 1 and in the Foundation Stage.
- ICT contributes well to raising standards in literacy, but is not used as well as it could be to help raise standards in other subjects.
- ICT contributes very well to pupils' personal development and well-being. Pupils can access a wide range of information, which contributes well to their knowledge and understanding of the world as well their local environment. They know about the importance of not sharing personal information and how to use the internet safely.

- Pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities and with a statement of special educational need, are helped to feel proud of what they can achieve in their work as a result of using ICT. This also contributes significantly to raising their self-esteem.
- ICT contributes very effectively to pupils learning to share and work collaboratively.

### Quality of teaching and learning of ICT

The quality of teaching and learning of ICT is good and have improved significantly in the last two years.

- Teaching and support staff have benefited enormously from high quality training tailored to meet their needs as well as opportunities to share and disseminate good practice. As a result, they are more confident and competent in their use of ICT and make good use of interactive whiteboards to enhance learning.
- ICT lessons are well planned and include an appropriate range of activities to meet the needs of pupils with different abilities.
- In the lessons observed, the teachers' passion for ICT was infectious. They planned activities, which they knew their pupils would enjoy, and demonstrated new learning in a fun and exciting way. As a result pupils engaged enthusiastically and remained focused and on task. Teachers made effective use of mini plenaries during the course of a lesson to help refocus pupils on the key learning objectives. This helped to maintain a rapid pace of learning leading to good progress. In a Year 3/4 lesson, the teacher pretended to recruit the pupils as police officers. Pupils thoroughly enjoyed using a database and doing searches to help solve some crimes. The activities fired the imagination of the pupils and made them eager to undertake their learning.
- However, some aspects of teaching are less effective; for example, key vocabulary in ICT is not always taught or reinforced in a way that encourages pupils use the correct terminology when they talk about their work.
- Teachers mark pupils work diligently against learning objectives. This helps pupils to recognise when they have done well and what they could do to further improve. However, teachers are not all sufficiently familiar with level descriptors and this at times causes some teachers to be over generous in their assessment of pupils' abilities. Furthermore, the use of assessment to support learning during lessons is not sufficiently well embedded.
- Pupils benefit from opportunities to make choices about how to support their own learning. This helps them to become increasingly independent in their use of ICT. Pupils state they would welcome more access to ICT during class based lessons.
- Teaching assistants provide good support to some of the most vulnerable pupils. They encourage pupils to be reflective and make use of what they already know, and when needed provide them with additional guidance. This helps to ensure these pupils participate fully and progress as well as their peers.

## Quality of the curriculum for ICT

The quality of the curriculum for ICT is good.

- ICT is taught through a creative and integrated curriculum. This places learning in a meaningful and purposeful context. Some good examples were seen at Key Stage 2. In one class, pupils were learning to use a spreadsheet to work out the total cost of fire works or a camping trip.
- All pupils receive their statutory National Curriculum entitlement. There is especially good provision for data logging and data handling and the school has recently improved the programme of work for teaching pupils about control technology.
- The quality of the ICT curriculum contributes significantly to the enjoyment of pupils' learning. This is because pupils appreciate the high quality of visual images and animation; they can access and retrieve work and information with ease and they enjoy interacting with technology at their own pace and in a way that is specifically tailored to their needs.
- There is clear guidance about progression in skills, understanding and knowledge; however, the school recognises that pupils are increasingly achieving more than is planned for.
- There are good links between ICT and other subjects in ICT based lessons. However, the reverse is not always true. This is leading to missed opportunities of using ICT to help raise standards in other subject areas, especially in the foundation subjects.
- The Primary National Strategy has helped to significantly increase the use of ICT in English. This has led to some very creative use of ICT by staff as well as pupils including the creation of film clips, radio shows and virtual tours of the school.

## Leadership and management of ICT

The quality of leadership and management of ICT is good.

- You are currently the interim leader and manager for ICT. Your passion for ICT is helping to drive up standards. You have ensured that staff all receive the training they require and have worked well with the governing body to ensure the school is equipped with technology that is fit for purpose.
- You have made very good use of a self-review tool to inform the action plan and to affirm priority areas. This has ensured that you have an accurate view of the strengths and areas for improvement.
- Governors are very supportive of ICT developments and ensure that expenses represent good value for money. There is a link governor and governors are kept informed about standards and progress in ICT.
- Although all subject leaders have ICT included within their remit, they do not all take sufficient account of the difference ICT is making within their subject.
- You recognise the need to develop the role of the new ICT co-ordinator when she takes up her post.

- Technical support is used effectively; this has helped teachers to become more confident to experiment with new technology.
- The school is currently piloting the use of a virtual learning environment and all staff have received training.

### Use of Assessment

The use of assessment in ICT is good overall.

- The school tracks and monitors the progress made by all pupils. This information is used particularly well at Key Stage 2 to identify pupils in need of additional support.
- Teachers are not all sufficiently familiar with the level descriptors and this at times leads to their assessment of pupils' work being overly generous.
- Teachers make effective use of assessment information to inform their planning and to help pupils know from one lesson to the next what they need to do to improve.
- Older pupils are not all sufficiently aware of the level at which they are working.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- ensuring that pupils make good progress in all year groups, particularly in the Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 1
- ensuring consistently good use of assessment strategies during lessons to help pupils make even better progress on a day-to-day basis.

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