

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404040
F 020 7421 6855
www.ofsted.gov.uk
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk



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Mrs F Clipson
Headteacher
Kilsby CofE Primary School
Manor Road
Kilsby
Rugby
CV23 8XS

Dear Mrs Clipson

Ofsted survey inspection programme – ICT (Information Communication Technology)

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 18 September 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 interviews with staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of three lessons.

The overall effectiveness of ICT was judged to be satisfactory.

Achievement and standards in ICT

Achievement and standards are satisfactory.

- Although pupils' capabilities in using new technologies are not evaluated when they join the school, assessments made for the Foundation Stage profiles show pupils' overall attainment on entry to be broadly average.
- Standards overall are average. They are better in the communicating and presenting aspects of ICT but below average in the use of spreadsheets, databases, controlling events, data logging and programming.

- Achievement is just satisfactory. This overall judgement reflects the variability in teaching and learning and in pupils' standards.
- Pupils work well independently and were often seen helping each other. They are aware of how to keep themselves safe when online.

Quality of teaching and learning of ICT

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

- During the inspection the quality of teaching and learning varied between satisfactory and inadequate.
- Where learning was best, teachers and teaching assistants had good subject knowledge and the necessary technical skills to help pupils improve their use of software. ICT was used with purpose to improve the learning of other subjects.
- Where learning was inadequate the same tasks were set for pupils regardless of their capabilities. Tasks lacked challenge and were too easy for the middle and higher attaining pupils. Consequently a majority of pupils completed the tasks quickly and then had little to occupy them for the greater part of the lesson. The pace of learning overall was slow and many pupils made insufficient progress.
- Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported well by teaching assistants and, considering their starting points, make better progress than other pupils.

Quality of the curriculum for ICT

The curriculum is satisfactory.

- The National Curriculum programmes of study are covered well in the Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1. However at Key Stage 2 some elements are barely covered. Provision for pupils to develop their capabilities in using spreadsheets and databases are limited and in using control, data logging and programming are superficial. Consequently standards in these aspects of ICT are below average.
- There is good provision for teaching pupils about the need to keep themselves safe when online and how they should go about doing that.
- The school offers a national after school computer club for girls programme (CC4G) which is well attended and has been so successful that a similar club for boys has also been introduced.

Leadership and management of ICT

Leadership and management are satisfactory.

- Self-evaluation is satisfactory and the outcomes are reported to the governors each year. You have identified the main strengths and weaknesses of provision and have plans in place to address weaknesses in curriculum provision and associated gaps in staff knowledge and skills.

- Staff training needs are audited through annual questionnaires. These show there are weaknesses in the staff's subject knowledge of control, data logging and programming. The staff have better knowledge of and skills in using spreadsheets and databases although the school recognises further training is required.
- Management of ICT resources is good. A visiting technician helps ensure systems are reliable. Good budget plans are in place for upgrading resources and for replacing defunct technology regularly. However the school's ability to implement its budget plan is hindered by the disproportionately high cost of broadband access it is charged by the local authority.

Use of Assessment

The use of assessment is inadequate.

- Some of the ICT work undertaken by pupils as part of topic work is assessed and contributes to an overall National Curriculum level at the end of the year. A very recently introduced tracking system now enables school to track progress on the four aspects of ICT which until this school year it was unable to do.
- Individual targets for ICT are not shared with pupils as they are for English, mathematics and science and so pupils are unaware of what they are aiming to achieve. You recognise that the school needs to track pupils' progress towards their targets on all four aspects of ICT.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- ensuring equal emphasis is given to all aspects of the National Curriculum for ICT by training staff to be able to use the applications they lack the skills to fully use
- developing pupil tracking and target setting so that the progress made by individual pupils in different aspects of ICT can be monitored and so that pupils are clear about what they are aiming for
- improving the pace and challenge of ICT experiences and particularly for middle and higher attaining pupils.

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

David Anstead
Her Majesty's Inspector