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Dear Mr Wollaston

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 the 03 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 interviews with staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of lessons.

The overall effectiveness of ICT is judged to be satisfactory.

Achievement and standards in ICT

Standards are average and achievement is satisfactory.

- The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) profile show children's overall attainment on entry to be very variable broadly in line with expectations. By the time they leave the EYFS their attainment is above average and for many this represents good progress. Children here use ICT confidently and competently.
- Pupils make satisfactory progress during Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, so that by the time they leave the vast majority are achieving the expected standard for their age. Currently progress in lessons is better

in Key Stage 1 because the school has introduced a new scheme of work that challenges pupils more than the one in Key Stage 2.

- Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because the teaching of ICT takes place in half–classes. This means that teachers can provide a good deal of one-to-one support. Those who are gifted and talented also receive targeted support and make sound progress. Overall achievement is satisfactory and improving.
- Pupils have good listening skills and sound speaking skills. Their response to teachers and their behaviour are good. They are keen to do well. Pupils work well together, for example in "talking pairs". They are developing a good awareness of the need to keep themselves safe when using communications that is reinforced well by teachers.

Quality of teaching and learning of ICT

Teaching and learning are good.

- There is evidence of teaching having improved recently. Good planning with learning objectives/outcomes made clear to the pupils at the beginning characterises the lessons. A particular strength is that teachers prepare pupils well for the lessons 'on the carpet' in their classroom before moving to the computer suite. Pupils then immediately settle to work and their time at the computers is maximised to full effect.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge which allows them to answer questions confidently and accurately. They cope well when things go wrong with the equipment. Teachers use interesting, well prepared resources and set differentiated tasks, though they do not remind pupils to save their work as they are going along and this can lead to problems. Their teaching of skills is good but lessons sometimes focus less well on developing pupils' understanding.

Quality of the curriculum for ICT

The curriculum is satisfactory.

- The school has historically closely followed the qualifications and curriculum authority (QCA) scheme of work but has now introduced a new, more challenging scheme in Key Stage 1. Some aspects of the programme of study have not been consistently delivered, such as control, parts of monitoring and some areas such as web design that would allow pupils to achieve at the higher levels. The school is aware that it needs to do more in this area. At present there is a reliance on standard commercial software to teach ICT whereas sometimes it would be better to use educational software.
- Opportunities for pupils to apply their ICT knowledge, skills and understanding are built well into teachers' planning of other subjects. The school offers a good extension to the curriculum through computer clubs. The plans to provide a better form of access to ICT from within

and outside the school through the introduction of a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) are appropriate.

Leadership and management of ICT

Leadership and management are good.

- The strategic plan for ICT is well conceived and addresses the areas most likely to raise standards. There is already evidence of a rise in standards due to effective implementation of new policies and scheme of work. You demonstrate good capacity to further improve ICT.
- Self-evaluation has begun and the plans are well designed to extend this, though there is no staff audit of knowledge, skills and understanding. Self-evaluation is accurate. Systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and of pupils' ICT work are in place.
- Good leadership has brought about significant improvements in the use of ICT and good management has ensured that resources are well planned and used, though as yet there is no rolling programme of replacement of technologies. Technical support is in place ensuring that computer systems are available when needed and are reliable.

Use of Assessment

The use of assessment is satisfactory.

- Pupils' work in ICT is assessed frequently against the National Curriculum with targets and sub-levels being set for classes. Pupils are monitored against these class targets.
- Examples of pupils' work are kept for moderation purposes and are monitored to ensure teacher assessment is accurate.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- provide more challenge by implementing the new scheme of work across all the school and focussing teaching on the development of understanding
- provide pupils with access to age related software
- implement a VLE as soon as practicable so that the school aims regarding enhanced ICT use can be further realised.

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

John Williams
Her Majesty's Inspector