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Mr C Davies
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Dear Mr Davies

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 4-5 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 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 outstanding.

Achievement and standards in ICT

Standards are above average and achievement is outstanding.

- Foundation stage profiles show pupils' overall attainment on entry to be very low. Many pupils have little access to computers at home so their ability to use ICT is well below average when they start the main school. They make good progress during Key Stage 1 and outstanding progress during Key Stage 2, so that by the time they leave the majority are achieving the expected standard for their age, and a significant number do better.

- By the end of Year 6 pupils use a wide range of software to improve their learning in a range of other subjects, particularly literacy and mathematics. They are able to make story boards from digital images they have taken whilst on school trips, use email safely and prepare presentations.
- Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are very well supported by teachers and teaching assistants to make the same excellent progress as other pupils.
- Pupils have good listening skills and enjoy speaking about their work. They are very enthusiastic about the opportunities they have to use ICT, including in the ICT club before, during and after school. They work extremely well together, listening and building on each others' ideas. Attitudes to learning and behaviour are outstanding. Pupils have a good awareness of the need to keep themselves safe when using communications. They are developing an awareness of the dangers of using ICT, for example in 'cloning' credit cards.

Quality of teaching and learning of ICT

Teaching and learning are outstanding because the impact on achievement is outstanding.

- Good planning of ICT related to literacy, numeracy and foundation subjects takes place. Tasks are differentiated and are challenging for all abilities. Teachers have good subject knowledge which enables them to answer pupils' questions well and to pose further questions.
- Teachers have excellent relationships with pupils and have outstanding classroom management skills that ensure pupils' social and emotional development is given the highest priority. Learning takes place at a good pace, though sometimes at the expense of reminding pupils to regularly pause and save their work. Pupils' response to teaching is excellent. They clearly enjoy what they are doing and the vast majority want to do well.

Quality of the curriculum for ICT

The curriculum is good.

- The school follows closely the qualifications and curriculum authority (QCA) scheme of work to ensure delivery of the National Curriculum, together with some enhancements to bring it up to date. The school is aware that it needs to do more in this area. All aspects are covered, though few pupils have the opportunity to learn how to design web pages.
- The quality of curriculum planning is good. Very good opportunities for pupils to use ICT are built into most subjects and there are clear links to literacy and numeracy.

- Provision for pupils to use ICT outside lessons is outstanding. Many pupils choose to attend the breakfast ICT club, the lunchtime club, or after school in order to develop their ICT. The school can demonstrate how this helped many pupils in 2007–08 who did not have a computer at home achieve the higher levels at the end of Year 6.
- Provision for the community to use the ICT is also very good. There is a flourishing parent group who use the computers to develop their own literacy and numeracy skills with some taking this further by seeking national accreditation.

Leadership and management of ICT

Leadership and management are good.

- ICT permeates the life of the school, especially in raising achievement, pupils' personal development and in raising the community's self esteem. Much effort is given to using ICT to enhance the learning opportunities of both pupils and parents and to enhance the learning of the community as a whole.
- 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. A rolling programme of replacement of technologies is in place.
- Self-evaluation is accurate, but formal review using a recognised self evaluation model, is in need of updating. The ICT development plan identifies correctly areas for development, though does not specifically mention attainment or targets. That said, you have a good view of what you are trying to achieve and it is understood by all in the school and by the vast range of outside agencies that support the work of the school. All involved are committed to using ICT to improve achievement and opportunities for pupils.
- Resources are well managed. Technical support is in place ensuring that computer systems are available when needed and are reliable. The school is aware that it needs to implement a virtual learning environment (VLE) as soon as possible in order to provide better access both within and outside school for teachers, pupils, parents, carers and the community in general.

Use of Assessment

The use of assessment is satisfactory.

- Pupils' work in ICT is assessed frequently against the QCA scheme of work and pupils are awarded a National Curriculum level. Teachers record the progress of groups of pupils, but this is more in terms of coverage of content than individual achievement. As such, pupils do not have individual targets for ICT.

- The school 'shared folder' system is used appropriately to record pupils' work. Teachers are assessing pupils' use of ICT when working in other subjects.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- ensuring all staff have the necessary subject knowledge, skills and confidence to teach all aspects of the ICT curriculum
- ensuring pupils have individual ICT targets and know what they have to do to reach those targets
- implement a VLE as soon as practicable.

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