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Mr A Budd
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Budd

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 26 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, pupils and parents, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of three part lessons.

The overall effectiveness of ICT was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards in ICT

Achievement is good. Standards are above average.

- Children enter the school with ICT skills which are broadly in line with national expectations. However there is a wide range of ICT ability some children are very confident about using ICT, but many need more help and guidance.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage children are encouraged to manipulate floor robots and use computers to play education games. They are confident users of the digital cameras.

- The pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6 with standards which are above the national average. They make good progress while they are at the school in all aspects of the National Curriculum including control, data logging, spreadsheets and databases.
- You have a comprehensive e-learning policy in place which all carers/parents have agreed to. On the rare occasion when pupils have accessed information they should not have done, through internet searching, you dealt with the situation promptly and effectively. The pupils spoken to were fully aware of how they could keep themselves safe when using new technologies and have put their learning into practice at home.
- When the pupils use ICT they are highly engaged and motivated. Their behaviour is outstanding. They are prepared to share the resources and are respectful to both each other and members of staff.
- Pupils are very proud of the work they have done in ICT, for example Year 6 were pleased with the presentations they had produced on the Blitz. They particularly enjoyed having their work displayed on the plasma screen in the foyer.

Quality of teaching and learning of ICT

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

- Teachers and teaching assistants have good subject knowledge. This is used to good effect to plan and support the learning of all the pupils.
- Teachers used good questioning techniques to challenge the children to think about what they were doing and what would happen if they did something else.
- In one lesson seen the use of light sensors connected to computers challenged the pupils to consider which fabric would make the best blackout blinds. This work linked to the work the pupils had done in science and also in history. Pupils were able to talk about how the use of ICT made their work easier and were able to compare using ICT to doing the work manually. Pupils were used to good effect to demonstrate to the class what they needed to do, and how they could annotate their work.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage some children discussed their use of laptops and how they used the laptop to use the interactive whiteboard to play a mathematical game. Children were confident about using floor robots to manipulate their way round a map.
- In a Key Stage 1 lesson literacy development was supported extremely well by the use of ICT. Pupils used the interactive whiteboard and computers positively to develop their stories. One group of pupils, ably supported by a teaching assistant, produced an excellent digital video of their story.
- However the low levels of literacy skills of some of the pupils, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage, means that some pupils are unable to benefit fully from ICT.

Quality of the curriculum for ICT

The ICT curriculum is good.

- All children and pupils receive their full entitlement to the National Curriculum. This includes good use of control technology, data logging, spreadsheets and databases.
- The use of ICT to support the teaching and learning across the curriculum is good.
- The use of ICT is planned to ensure that pupils are able to make good progress in both developing their ICT skills and their capability.
- The curriculum is reviewed regularly to ensure that links across the curriculum are embedded. However you recognise that there are opportunities for developing the curriculum to enable the pupils to make even better progress and, specifically, access higher ICT levels.
- You have developed a successful, and much appreciated, early bird computer club. This enables parents/careers twice a week to use the computer suite with their children before school.

Leadership and management of ICT

Leadership and management of ICT are good.

- The vision for ICT is clearly articulated: ICT is used as a tool to enable the pupils at the school to have better life chances. This vision is embedded in school particularly in teaching and learning where pupils are encouraged to think about why they are using ICT and how it can improve what they are doing.
- There is a good structured process of self evaluation. This means that the development of ICT is regularly reviewed. This review process links to the ICT development plan.
- The teaching and learning of ICT is monitored through lesson observations, scrutiny of work and discussions with pupils. This means that targets are set for improving the teaching and learning of ICT.
- The four principles of best value: challenge, compare, consult and competition are in place. The governors are involved in the acquisition of resources as are the staff.
- You are in the process of developing a virtual learning environment.

Use of Assessment

The use of assessment is satisfactory.

- Pupils are aware of what they need to do to improve their work. However the targets are generic rather than being specific to each pupil.
- Work is assessed but the assessment does not specifically link to the National Curriculum levels. This means that pupils are unsure of what level they are at.
- Whole school tracking and monitoring procedures are in place. These are reviewed regularly.

- In lessons assessment is used well to enable the pupils to make good progress. Pupils are encouraged to review their work and consider how they could improve it. This assessment, however, tends to be verbal rather than written.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- developing the curriculum to take advantage of all the cross curricular links to enable the pupils to access the higher levels
- improving the use of assessment.

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

Tanya Harber Stuart
Her Majesty's Inspector