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Mrs L Bills
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Dear Mrs Bills

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 11 February 2009 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 include discussions with staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and joint 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 age related expectations.

- Pupils make good progress in Reception and at Key Stages 1 and 2. Most pupils in Years 2 and 6 are already working securely within levels expected for the end of their key stage, with some attaining higher levels.
- Pupils of all abilities including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good use of ICT to present information in a clear and interesting way. Pupils are particularly adept at creating high quality multimedia presentations. These not only combine different forms of information and demonstrate a good awareness of audience, but also include a balance of text and colourful images as well as sound recordings, edited digital stills and hyperlinks.

- Pupils are proud of the quality of their work in ICT, especially those who struggle to write or keep their work neat in other subjects.
- From as young as five years of age, pupils learn to add to, amend and interrogate information from a variety of forms.
- Although attainment is high within many aspects of ICT, pupils' understanding of control and modelling is less well developed.
- The informed use of ICT is helping to raise standards in other subjects especially in English, mathematics and science. However, there are missed opportunities of ICT contributing to pupils' higher order writing skills at Key Stage 2.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe when using new technology. However, you do not monitor formally the effectiveness of provision for teaching pupils about internet safety.

Quality of teaching and learning of ICT

The quality of teaching and learning of ICT is good.

- Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and the confidence to experiment with the use of ICT. This is helping to make learning even more enjoyable and exciting.
- Teaching and support staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and encourage them to become independent users of ICT.
- Teachers make effective use of having to teach mixed age classes, to create opportunities for the more able younger pupils, to work alongside older pupils.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to be creative in their use of ICT. Good examples were seen with pupils creating their own adventure games, which included innovative scenarios and problems solving activities.
- Features of good lessons typically include teachers helping pupils to recall and build effectively on previous learning, the effective use of whiteboards to demonstrate new learning and good opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively to apply what is being taught.
- However, the introductory parts of lessons do not always include sufficient strategies for keeping all pupils actively engaged.
- The quality of teachers' planning is good. It makes effective use of previous evaluations to meet the different needs and abilities of pupils.
- Although key vocabulary is included within planning and is used well by staff, it is not always displayed. This is unhelpful to some of the lower ability pupils who at times struggle to use the correct terminology to talk about their work.
- Pupils speak enthusiastically about their work in ICT and would welcome more opportunities to use ICT particularly in some of the foundation subjects at Key Stage 2.

Quality of the curriculum for ICT

The quality of the curriculum for ICT is good.

- Curriculum guidance is helpful in enabling staff to plan good levels of progression for all pupils.

- The application of ICT across the curriculum is developing well. There is a helpful curriculum map, which identifies links between subjects. This is supporting the integration of ICT within other subjects.
- The application of ICT in some subjects provides a window to the outside world for pupils of all ages. This helps younger children to learn more about their local environment and older pupils to find out about other countries and cultures.
- The application of ICT in mathematics and science helps pupils to interrogate and analyse data. Their use of spreadsheets and formulae enables older pupils to test hypotheses and compare test results for example, about the mean, mode and range of numerical values and the differences in temperature and light around the school.
- The school has an appropriate range of hardware and software, which facilitate the application of ICT in a wide range of contexts. This leads to good opportunities for pupils to be creative. Having undertaken work in science using data loggers to record changes in the weather, pupils produced their own weather forecasts. These included recordings of their own broadcasts, the creation of maps, which depicted different weather conditions and weather reports for major cities in the United Kingdom.

Leadership and management of ICT

Leadership and management of ICT are good.

- There is a clear vision for ICT, which is shared and embraced by staff and governors. This has led to staff and governors ensuring the school has resources that are fit for purpose, and that these are well utilised.
- You have developed high quality management plans. Action plans detail the intended outcomes for learners; they also include success criteria that are measurable.
- Progress against the key issues within the ICT action plan are reviewed on annual basis. This enables the school to re-evaluate and amend priorities accordingly.
- You have made very good use of an on line ICT evaluation tool, to identify strengths and areas for improvement.
- ICT is included within the remit of all subject leaders; however, they are not evaluating the impact of ICT on their area of responsibility.
- You ensure that staff receive high quality professional development. This contributes to their high level of confidence and ICT skills.
- The school benefits from having a governor linked to ICT. However, governors do not currently receive sufficient information from the school about progress and standards in ICT.
- The school ensures that best value principles are applied when purchasing equipment.

Use of Assessment

The use of assessment in ICT is satisfactory.

- You have correctly identified assessment as an area for development.

- ICT is used effectively as a management tool to help assess and track pupils' progress in the core subjects. However, this has yet to be extended to include the assessment of ICT as a discrete subject.
- Although teachers assess pupils capability against National Curriculum level descriptors, there is insufficient tracking of different groups of pupils.
- There are missed opportunities for pupils to use assessment criteria to help them to reflect on how well they are progressing during a lesson.
- Older pupils are not sufficiently familiar with the level at which they are working.
- There is limited use of numerical targets to help drive further improvement.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- ensuring pupils' skills and understanding of control and modelling are as good as they are for other aspects of the ICT curriculum
- embedding new assessment strategies and make consistently good use of targets to help drive further improvement
- ensuring the school evaluates formally the effectiveness of its provision for teaching pupils about internet safety.

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.

Ofsted gathers information on the immediate and longer-term impact of survey inspections, both on the institutions themselves, and with a view to improving its own processes. To this end, I should be grateful if you would complete the attached questionnaire and return it within the next ten days. We have also just sent a copy of the questionnaire by email. Please return your completed questionnaire to either the email or postal address on the form, not to me. We may also contact some schools by telephone after several months in order for us to gain a picture of longer-term impact. Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Yours sincerely

Gehane Gordelier
Her Majesty's Inspector