27 March 2009

Mrs N Wilkinson
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Wilkinson

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 19 March 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 included interviews with yourself, observation of a Early Years Foundation Stage lesson, a Year 3/4 and a Year 5/6 lesson, discussion with Year 2 and Year 6 pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation and analysis of pupils' work.

The overall effectiveness of ICT was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards in ICT

Standards in ICT are above national expectations by the end of Key Stage 2. Achievement is good.

- Children enter school with ICT skills and capabilities that are generally in line with national expectations. By the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage they have made good progress. They confidently use the interactive whiteboard in the classroom, floor robots and computers in the suite. They use the mouse with confidence, for

- example to drag and drop numbers into a sequence, and are happy to experiment.
- Through Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils continue to make good progress, which accelerates in Years 5 and 6. By Year 6, standards are above national averages.
- Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and gifted and talented pupils is good, resulting in good progress.
- Pupils with learning difficulties have access to a range of programs to support their learning.
- As part of their 'Golden time', Year 5 and 6 pupils, able and interested in ICT, are given the opportunity to help and support younger pupils with their ICT work. This not only consolidates and supports the Year 5 and 6 pupils with their ICT, as well as raising their personal development and self-esteem, but is accelerating the learning of younger pupils, especially those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make equally good progress.
- ICT makes an outstanding contribution to pupils' personal development and enjoyment. Throughout the school, pupils work extremely well together and are happy to help their peers if they are in difficulty. They are proud of their work and ICT skills and are happy to discuss these with adults.
- By Year 6 pupils have a good understanding of internet safety. They are aware that access to the internet in school is monitored and filtered but that care still needs to be taken when accessing internet sites. They are also aware that the same care needs to be made at home.
- ICT is having a good impact on raising standards in many subjects. For example, good examples were observed of planned use of ICT to support literacy, speaking and listening, mathematics, geography and history.

Quality of teaching and learning of ICT

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

- Teachers' subject knowledge, and their confidence in using ICT to support teaching and learning, are good.
- Lessons are well planned and well resourced. Good use is made of the computer suite. ICT skills lessons are timetabled on a weekly basis. Pupils are also given the opportunity to use the suite independently for research or to use their ICT skills to support other subjects of the curriculum.
- In the two classes where there are interactive whiteboards, teachers and pupils use them with confidence. In the two classes, and the intervention classroom, where compters are linked to projectors, they are used well by teachers to support teaching and learning, though they lack the impact of the interactive whiteboards.
- Pupils are very motivated by the planned ICT activities and consequently behaviour in classroom lessons, and in the suite, is outstanding.

- Since September 2008, a teacher is employed one day a week to teach ICT skills to Years 3 to 6. This is having a positive impact on pupils' progress in ICT and the skills learnt are being transferred well to support other subjects.
- Teaching assistants give good support for groups and individual activities, which include ICT. This is particularly so in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- In two of the three lessons observed, the teachers shared the success criteria for the lesson, including the success criteria for the use of ICT. However, the language used was not always appropriate for the pupils' understanding, and so not all pupils were able to self-assess against the criteria.

Quality of the curriculum for ICT

The quality of the ICT curriculum is good.

- Following your appointment as headteacher in March 2008, and the subsequent inspection in the same month, you have put into place a development plan which is addressing the inspection judgements 'to improve the scope' for using ICT and 'to support learning in other subjects'. The National Curriculum programme of study for ICT is fully planned for and taught well, through the use of a national scheme. Good links are made between other subjects of the National Curriculum, which makes learning relevant and enjoyable for pupils. They consistently referred to ICT as being 'fun'.
- By Year 6, ICT is used well to enable pupils to develop their independent learning and creative thinking skills. This was especially noticeable in the Year 5/6 literacy lesson, where pupils worked in groups, or independently, to produce a presentation using a choice of ICT formats.
- The subject is soundly resourced. You have identified in your development plan the need to purchase equipment, such as sensors for monitoring external events. However, this aspect of the ICT curriculum is being covered through a six week topic in Year 5/6 on sound, which is taught by a musician, and through the support of the local advisor for science, who provides sensors for pupils to monitor sound and temperature.
- As a result of all classes being of mixed age groups, the ICT scheme is planned over a two year cycle.
- A "homework surgery" for pupils who have limited access to computers and/or the internet at home is available throughout the week.

Leadership and management of ICT

The leadership and management of ICT are good.

- At the time of your appointment, two of your four teachers were NQTs and one had only recently completed her NQT year. With your senior teacher, you prioritized English, especially writing, as the initial area for raising standards and achievement. Since September 2008, you have

been able to allocate leadership responsibilities to all teaching staff and you have made ICT one of the priorities for this school year. Since then you have made a good impact on the development of the subject, which is seeing standards rise throughout the school and resources improve.

- Staff meetings include, when relevant, an ICT element. All staff have been trained to use the Interactive whiteboards and further training is planned for all staff as soon as the two new interactive whiteboards, which were delivered the week of my visit, are installed.
- You have begun to monitor teaching, with a focus on the use of ICT across the curriculum. This gives good support for the development of ICT and is improving teachers' skills and knowledge.
- The policy of 'best value' is adhered to well. New equipment, such as the two new interactive whiteboards, is bought on the basis of value for money and the impact is reviewed in relation to pupils' learning.
- The school's website is informative and supports teaching and learning through links to other sites. The site also informs parents and carers about day-to-day activities in the school.
- The ICT development plan is focused on improving teaching and resources, in order to raise standards and achievement.
- The governor for ICT resigned his position at Christmas 2008 because of work commitments. However, he continues to support ICT well and has agreed to do so until the roles of the governors are redefined in April 2009.
- Pupils and staff have a good understanding of safe use of the internet. However there is no written policy for the appropriate use of laptops and computers in school by staff, and for the use of school laptops and memory sticks when taken off the premises and used at home. You have identified this as a priority in your development plan.

Use of Assessment

The use of assessment is satisfactory.

- The development and use of assessment in ICT is identified as a priority in your development plan. Since September, regular assessments have been introduced against coverage of the ICT curriculum and the skills demonstrated by pupils.
- Assessment relates to National Curriculum levels but not sub-levels or average points scores. The information being collected is relatively new and is only now beginning to support the tracking of pupils' progress and achievement.
- Pupils are not aware of the levels they are achieving in ICT, and what is required for them to progress to the next level or sub-level.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, and which you have already identified in your ICT development plan, included:

- developing the range of assessment opportunities in order to systematically track pupils' progress, and to share targets with pupils so that they know what they need to do to improve

- ensuring that resources within the school fully match the needs of the curriculum
- ensuring that the aspects of health and safety are written into the ICT policy.

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

Anthony Green
Additional Inspector