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Dear Mrs Huie-Manneh

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 28 April 2009 to look at work in ICT. As outlined in the 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 discussions with you, some of the staff and a group of pupils from Year 6, as well as scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and two joint lesson observations.

The overall effectiveness of ICT was judged to be satisfactory.

Achievement and standards in ICT

Pupils' achievement in ICT is satisfactory. Standards are broadly in line with expectations and are improving, particularly for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children make particularly good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of the world through the use of ICT. A good example was the use of a metal detector in the sand pit for pupils to work in pairs to find and count 'buried treasure' and every day items. This included children learning to take turns and developing their speaking and listening skills by talking about the items they found such as what spoons are used for and the shape and colour of toy cars.

- Standards are rising and are broadly average in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall, but too few attain higher levels.
- Older pupils are aware of the level at which they are working but not of what their targets are in ICT.
- There are satisfactory opportunities for pupils to develop as independent learners by being set work that requires research. However, the pupils themselves would welcome more opportunities to make choices about what ICT to use to support their learning in other subjects.
- Opportunities for pupils to use and apply ICT in English, mathematics and science are helping to raise standards in these areas.
- ICT is used well to help pupils to practise and develop basic literacy and numeracy skills especially for those with a statement of special educational needs and learning difficulties and/or learning disabilities.
- Pupils who previously displayed poor attitudes to learning have become more interested in their learning and are keen to complete work which is relevant to their needs and interests when ICT is used. This is also helping to raise the self-esteem and confidence of targeted pupils.
- Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and have enjoyed using an on line programme to reinforce their understanding of this important area. The school has undertaken an e-safety questionnaire with parents and pupils, but has yet to evaluate the impact of its own policy on e-safety.

Quality of teaching and learning of ICT

The quality of teaching and learning of ICT is satisfactory.

- Good ICT training for staff has resulted in them developing their confidence and competence of using ICT to support teaching and learning in a range of subjects.
- Teachers make effective use of interactive whiteboards (IWBs) in lessons to introduce and demonstrate new learning. Pupils find this helpful and more efficient use of teaching and learning time.
- Teaching typically includes clear learning intentions and a strong focus on helping pupils to learn and use correct terminology. Teachers make effective use of questions to help pupils to recall and build on previous learning.
- Where teaching is good ICT lessons include the same generic teaching strategies used in other lessons. For example in a good Year 1 lesson, in which pupils were learning about data bases, pupils were encouraged to discuss their views with a partner before responding to their teacher's questions. In this lesson the teacher also checked pupils' understanding and progress regularly to ensure all pupils were on track to meet the learning objectives.
- Where teaching is less effective there are not enough different activities or expectations for pupils with different abilities. Consequently, expectations of what higher attainers can achieve are at times too low. Additional adults are not always used to best effect especially during the first part of lessons, nevertheless they contribute particularly well to the main part of lessons and this helps to ensure

that all pupils including those with a statement of special educational need and learning difficulties and/or learning disabilities progress as well as their peers. Teaching is at times too directive, and this encourages pupils to become passive in their learning and not participate as fully as they might.

- Planning, although adequate, does not always specify the skills being taught and there is a lack of detail about how the different needs of pupils will be met.
- The school has invested in a range of ICT equipment including handheld technologies and this has enabled staff to provide more opportunities to develop their ability to use ICT in a range of contexts. There is particularly good use of digital stills for pupils to keep a visual record and review the quality of their work.
- Pupils state they feel more involved when teachers use IWBs; however, they also state that at times the introductory part of ICT lessons is too long and that as a result, they are not provided with sufficient time in which to complete their work.
- Pupils appreciate being able to produce and submit their work using the internet.
- You make special arrangements for those who do not have access to computers or the internet at home to have additional access to computers in school.

Quality of the curriculum for ICT

The quality of the ICT curriculum is satisfactory.

- All aspects of the National Curriculum are covered. There is a clear map of what is taught and when in ICT, for every term and in every year group. There are also helpful links to relevant guidance materials.
- However, there is no overview which identifies opportunities of linking units of work for ICT with other areas of the curriculum. This results in missed opportunities for pupils to apply and develop their ICT skills in other subjects.
- The school makes effective use of its links with a local technology centre to provide pupils with opportunities to learn to use data loggers and sensors and to help them develop their knowledge and skills of control technology and data handling.
- The use of ICT across the curriculum is developing well. This is supporting pupils' learning across a broad range of areas including their knowledge and understanding of other cultures and faiths. A good example is the use of virtual tours for pupils to learn about different places of worship.
- Links between ICT and other areas of learning is developing particularly well in the Early Years Foundation Stage. A good example was seen in the nursery with children learning to count as they joined in with a music programme being displayed on the IWB. The children joined in with the simulation of somebody playing the drums by counting the beats. The numbers were also written alongside each drum to help reinforce how to write a number numerically.

- Although adequate, curriculum guidance materials do not provide the level of information staff now require to ensure they are sharply focused on improving pupils' skills and capabilities in ICT.

Leadership and management of ICT

Leadership and management of ICT are satisfactory.

- There is a vision for ICT that has been shared and agreed with staff and governors.
- There is now greater parental involvement for example through the use of questionnaires about e-safety.
- The ICT coordinator has provided demonstration lessons and led good quality training.
- The greater focus on raising standards in the Early Years Foundation Stage is leading to good improvements in the use of ICT in this part of the school.
- However, the role of the ICT coordinator is underdeveloped. Consequently, there has not been a strong enough focus on raising standards or the progress made by different groups of learners.
- The evaluation of the subject lacks rigour and is not sufficiently focused on standards, progress or the quality of teaching and learning. Nevertheless, the ICT coordinator has a clear and accurate view of the school's strengths and that which requires further improvement.
- However, plans intended to help bring about improvement do not include sufficient reference to outcomes for learners and success criteria are not sufficiently measurable.
- ICT is not included within the remit of other subject leaders; there are informal discussions between staff about the use of ICT in other subjects, but no formal reports that evaluate the impact of ICT in other areas.
- At a senior management level, ICT has been used effectively to improve the quality of whole school administration.

Use of Assessment

Use of assessment in ICT is satisfactory.

- A base line for ICT is established at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage when teachers assess children's knowledge and understanding of the world.
- At Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, teachers begin new units of work by talking to pupils about what they already know to help build effectively on previous learning.
- Teachers assess pupils' levels in ICT at the end of each unit of work, but assessments are not always sufficiently diagnostic.
- Pupils who require more support are beginning to self-assess and this is helping them to identify how they can help themselves. However, this has yet to be rolled out to all pupils.
- The ICT coordinator has developed a more user friendly format for pupils to use to help inform them about how well they are doing and to help teachers monitor pupils' progress more closely. However, the

curriculum's limited focus on skills is unhelpful to the school's efforts at improving assessment systems.

- Pupils state they would welcome more feedback about how well they are progressing and what they can do to improve during a unit of work. Older pupils are more aware of the level at which they are working than younger pupils at Key Stage 2.
- Although the progress made by pupils is reviewed at the end of each academic year, this is not sufficient to ensure that all groups of pupils make the progress of which they are capable. Furthermore, assessment systems for ICT are inconsistent.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- raising expectations of what higher attaining pupils can achieve so that more pupils reach the higher levels
- developing a more skills based curriculum for ICT
- developing a consistent approach to assessing how well different groups of pupils are progressing during the course of the year
- developing the role of the ICT coordinator as well as the quality of subject documentation so that there is a sharper focus on improving achievement and raising standards, and that action and improvement plans specify how pupils will benefit and include success criteria that are measurable.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop ICT in the school.

As I explained in the 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

Gehane Gordelier
Her Majesty's Inspector