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Ms N Webb
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Webb

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 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 two part lessons.

The overall effectiveness of ICT was judged to be satisfactory.

Achievement and standards in ICT

Achievement is satisfactory. Standards are broadly average.

- Pupils' experiences of technology and capability in using ICT on entering the school are broadly average. Standards reported by the school at the end of Key Stage 2 have been average representing satisfactory achievement.
- Standards seen in lessons during the inspection and in pupils' work were often above average indicating standards are rising as a result of good teaching and learning, a greater variety of resources and an improved curriculum.

- Pupils are well motivated, happy and work very well with each other. They are confident in their use of ICT and able to work independently. The majority say they use ICT at home to help them with their school work.
- The pupils spoken to were inconsistent in their awareness of how to keep themselves safe when online. Some talked knowledgeably about the dangers posed by computer viruses. Others had a limited awareness that strangers they might encounter when online may be pretending to be someone else and may pose a danger to them.

Quality of teaching and learning of ICT

Teaching and learning are good.

- All ICT lessons observed were judged to be good or outstanding. Lessons were extremely well planned and included a variety of activities suitable for pupils' differing starting points. Teachers and learning support assistants worked very well together in managing the classes and supporting individuals.
- Pupils were clear about their learning objectives for the lesson and were motivated and excited by the tasks they were given to do.
- ICT is used well to improve learning in other subjects. The school attributes the widespread use of ICT in English, mathematics and science as partly responsible for the improving standards in those subjects.

Quality of the curriculum for ICT

The curriculum is good.

- Statutory requirements for the ICT National Curriculum are met and there is a good balance between the different strands pupils are expected to experience. There is good provision for pupils to learn to capture data from sensors connected to computers. For instance temperature probes are used to measure the temperatures generated at the centre of a decomposing pile of wood chips over time.
- The use of ICT is well planned into topics of work. Pupils have plentiful opportunities to use ICT and progression from year to year in all the National Curriculum strands is well planned. One girl spoke enthusiastically about how she had created an animated presentation on the Greek gods to which she had added her own sound tracks and hyperlinks. Other pupils had found using images from digital microscopes and cameras had enhanced their work.
- There is good provision for progressing pupils' programming skills as they move up the school. In Year 2 pupils write simple programs using numbers to indicate how many times specific instructions should be executed by a floor robot. During Year 6 pupils use software to construct and test their own flow diagrams using standard symbols and syntax. They write more sophisticated programs to control floor robots including some instances where pupils were able to get a robot equipped with a marker pen to trace out their own names on the floor.

Leadership and management of ICT

Leadership and management are good.

- The school's priority over the last three years has been to continue to raise standards in English, mathematics and science. More recently it has begun to prioritise raising standards in other subjects including ICT through a completely revised curriculum. The curriculum has been rewritten around topics into which the use of ICT has been carefully incorporated. New resources necessary to deliver this ambitious curriculum were identified and installed. Teachers' and learning support assistants' skills were audited and training provided to ensure they have the skills necessary to deliver the new curriculum. Good attention has been paid to planning high quality ICT experiences and ensuring they can be delivered well.
- Good leadership and management have brought about a sustained improvement in provision over the last few years. However, although the use of assessment has not been improved at the same time, the school has already identified that this is its next priority for action.
- You applied the principles of 'best value' satisfactorily in expanding the ICT resources. The required procurement processes were followed, pupils and staff were consulted about the ICT resources they would like to see and the school benchmarked the costs of its plans against similar schools. Limited attention however was given to considering alternative approaches.
- The school is ahead of the national timescales for having a functioning virtual learning environment (VLE) in place. However although the VLE has been established, continuing technical difficulties are hampering the school's efforts to use it to improve assessment by establishing moderated online portfolios of pupils work illustrating what they can do.

Use of Assessment

The use of assessment is inadequate.

- Teachers record the ICT skills pupils have covered during the year with an indication of whether they are exceeding, meeting or not meeting expectations. These records, supplemented by periodic testing, give a general overview of pupil progress but not one that is sufficiently detailed or rigorous. The school can derive National Curriculum levels from its assessment processes at the end of each Key Stage but cannot analyse with accuracy for instance in which year group's progress is greatest or weakest or whether different groups of pupils make similar or different progress to each other.
- Accordingly the school is unable to track the development of individual pupils' ICT skills. This means the school is unaware of pupils' achievements when set against robust and challenging targets. It is

insufficiently informed about which individuals need extra help to boost their attainment in some aspects of ICT.

- The school has already recognised these deficiencies in its assessment procedures and plans are well advanced to introduce a robust tracking system utilising National Curriculum levels next year.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- implementing assessment arrangements to enable the school to track individual pupil progress towards challenging targets
- developing the VLE to enable online portfolios of pupils' work to be collated and assessed as examples of what pupils can do for the schools they transfer to
- ensuring all pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe when online.

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

David Anstead
Her Majesty's Inspector