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Dear Miss De Rosa

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 29 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 discussions with you, some of the staff and a group of pupils, as well as scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and two lesson observations.

The overall effectiveness of ICT was judged to be satisfactory.

Achievement and standards in ICT

Achievement is satisfactory and standards in ICT are broadly in line with expectations.

- Attainment on entry to the school in Year 3 is broadly average. Pupils make satisfactory progress by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils achieve particularly well in their capability of developing multi-media presentations; however, their ability to control devices, create and use data bases as well as using sensors for example, for data logging is less well developed.
- The school does not set targets in ICT and too few pupils attain the higher levels.
- Vulnerable pupils make good progress in developing their ICT skills particularly those with a statement of educational need or with learning

difficulties and/or disabilities. A good example is the positive way in which pupils with autism respond to the visual impact of ICT by having a visual timetable and by being able to access the curriculum with ease.

- ICT is having a positive impact on helping to raise standards of literacy and aspects of mathematics, particularly number work and calculation. However, there are at times missed opportunities during ICT based lessons for teachers to reinforce basic skills.
- Pupils state they would welcome the use of laptops in class based lessons as well as more opportunities for them to make choices about what software to use and how it could be used to support their learning in other subjects.
- Pupils would like more access to ICT including the reinstatement of ICT clubs. They would also welcome having access to a wider range of hardware and software, although they appreciate the financial constraints on the school.
- ICT contributes well to pupils' personal development and well-being. They learn to take turns and enjoy supporting each other when working in pairs.
- The school does not evaluate its policy on e-safety; nevertheless, pupils demonstrate a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe.

## Quality of teaching and learning of ICT

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

- Teachers' subject knowledge is improving and there are now pockets of good practise.
- Typically lessons are well planned and follow a clearly mapped out programme of work. Teaching focuses appropriately on the skills pupils are expected to learn and lessons are set in a purposeful context. Teachers make effective use of interactive whiteboards (IWB) to demonstrate new learning; this captivates pupils because of the colourful and visual impact of the resources used. This helps them to grasp what is being taught with relative ease.
- Where teaching is good, lesson objectives are discussed, displayed and referred to frequently. In a good Year 6 lesson, in which pupils were learning to produce branching data bases, which included simple animation and sound files, the teacher checked pupils' understanding at regular intervals and built quickly and effectively on their previous learning. The teacher ensured that pupils used key words when discussing the work and responding to questions. The lesson progressed at a good pace and pupils were encouraged to refer to success criteria to help them to evaluate how well they had progressed.
- Where teaching is less successful teachers underestimate what pupils are capable of particularly during the first part of lessons. This at times leads to the most able pupils not being sufficiently well challenged.
- Although the content of ICT lessons is at times linked to work in other subjects, these links are not always sufficiently explicit; this results in missed opportunities of maximising and reinforcing learning.

- The use of assessment in lessons, although developing is not used consistently well to support pupils with their learning or to inform teachers of how well pupils are progressing.
- Planning although adequate does not identify the links that exist with other subjects, and the different level of skills being taught to pupils of varying abilities is not always sufficiently clear.
- Although the school has an adequate range of ICT resources, these are not easily accessible in and around the school and the conditions in the computer suite are too cramped.
- Pupils enjoy opportunities of using ICT to be creative for example creating the front cover of a book or newspaper.

### Quality of the curriculum for ICT

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory.

- The curriculum generally meets the needs and interests of pupils. However, there are gaps in the guidance for teachers about how to extend and challenge pupils in the development of their skills in control technology, data logging and data handling.
- Although the programme of work has recently been updated and includes a range of helpful guidance it does not identify the level at which pupils will be working within each unit of work. This makes it difficult for non-specialist ICT teachers to plan work for the more able pupils.
- The school has developed a map which identifies what will be taught and when for every year group and every term and half term. However, there is no cross-curricular overview of possible links between ICT and other subjects. This results in missed opportunities of maximising and reinforcing learning by linking subject content which is relevant.
- The application of ICT in other subjects is developing well, but this has yet to be firmly embedded. A good example of helpful guidance for staff about how ICT can be used to support provision is in Art. For this subject, teachers are encouraged for example, to use the internet to access the website for the National Portrait Gallery and other picture gallery sites, to help pupils to research different artists. There is also guidance about how ICT can be used to reinforce links between Art and History.
- Pupils enjoy using mathematics programmes, which enable them to practise and develop skills. They particularly enjoy competing against themselves to reach higher scores as well as competing against others. Pupils' participated in World Maths Day by using the internet. The activity also helped to improve their knowledge of geography as they looked at maps for the location of the schools around the world with which they were liaising.

### Leadership and management of ICT

Leadership and management are satisfactory.

- The way in which ICT is led and managed ensures that ICT makes a good contribution to the school's policy on inclusion for the most vulnerable pupils.
- The ICT coordinator is relatively new in post and recognises the need to develop her leadership and management role. She has a broadly accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and has helped to raise the profile of ICT in the school.
- The ICT coordinator undertook an audit of whole staff training needs and led good training for staff about how to use new software and hardware. A good example was the training provided for staff to use IWB. As a result this resource has become part of everyday teaching and learning.
- However, documentation intended to help drive improvement in the subject is not sufficiently robust. There has been no formal evaluation of the subject, consequently action plans for ICT have not included a sharp enough focus on the quality of teaching and learning, raising standards or targeting pupils at risk of underachieving.
- Although the ICT coordinator has a clear view of the potential of ICT and how it could add value to pupils' learning, the school does not have a formally agreed vision for ICT which has been shared and agreed with staff and governors.
- The school applies best value principles when purchasing new equipment and this has helped to ensure that new hardware, although not necessarily the cheapest is fit for purpose, reliable and user friendly.
- The view expressed by some of the staff is that the technical support the school receives is adequate. However, the school only receives support once a fortnight, and it is proving unhelpful not having the same technician on a regular basis.
- Although ICT is included in the remit of other subject leaders, there is currently no evaluation of the impact of ICT in other subjects.

## Use of Assessment

The use of assessment in ICT is satisfactory.

- You have correctly identified this as a key area in need of improvement.
- The programme of work identifies assessment opportunities which teachers find helpful to include in their planning.
- Teachers assess and level pupils' work at the end of each unit.
- Pupils are beginning to contribute to the assessment of their work by completing self-assessment sheets.
- Pupils welcome the feedback they receive from teachers, but they are unclear about the level at which they are working. They state that it would be helpful to have targets for ICT in the same way they have targets for English and mathematics.
- The use of assessment during lessons is developing, but is not sufficiently well embedded. As a result teaching sometimes underestimates what pupils can achieve and this at times slows down the pace of learning.

- The progress made by different groups of pupils is not tracked and monitored well enough during the course of the year.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- ensuring there is consistently good challenge for the higher attaining pupils so that that more pupils achieve the higher levels
- embedding the use of assessment strategies to support learning in lessons and improve the tracking of the progress made by different groups of pupils
- developing curriculum guidance so that it provides an indication of National Curriculum levels within units of work
- developing the role of the ICT coordinator as well as improving the quality of subject documentation so that there is a greater focus on raising standards.

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 sent to Southwark's diocesan board and will be made available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Gehane Gordelier  
Her Majesty's Inspector