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Dear Mr Barnes

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 18 May 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 visits to your infant and junior departments, which are on separate sites, interviews with yourself, your deputy headteacher, your ICT subject leader and your ICT specialist teacher, observation of a Year 1/2 lesson, observation of pupils using computers in the infant department suite and library, a Year 6 lesson in the junior department suite, a Year 6 lesson in a classroom, a 'learning walk' from Foundation Stage to Year 6 between the two school sites, a brief visit to the independent nursery on site, observation of a Year 2 ICT based assembly for parents, a visit to your ICT lunchtime club, discussion with Year 2 and Year 6 pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation and analysis of pupils' work, to observe a range of ICT activities throughout the school.

The overall effectiveness of ICT was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards in ICT

Standards in ICT are above the national average by the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Achievement is good.

- Pupils enter school with ICT skills and capabilities that are in line with national expectations. By the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage they have made good progress. They confidently use a keyboard and mouse, the interactive whiteboard (IWB), floor robots, art programs, interactive programs on educational sites and CD players. They are developing a good awareness of the how ICT is used throughout the home and in the wider community.
- Through Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils make good progress. By the end of Key Stage 2 standards are above the national averages. However, as a result of increasingly high expectations of staff, easier access to resources in Key Stage 1 and improved resources in the two Key Stage departments, standards are rapidly rising and are beginning to impact positively throughout the school.
- The use of ICT makes an outstanding contribution to pupils' personal development and enjoyment. Pupils work extremely well together and are very happy to help their peers if they are in difficulty. For example, pupils in Year 6 gave exemplary presentations on Shakespeare and the Egyptians. They listened to each other with wrapt attention and when one pupil had problems with the IWB the class waited patiently, whilst another pupil immediately volunteered to resolve the problem. Throughout the school, pupils are very proud of their achievements in ICT. They confidently discuss their work with each other, adults and visitors. Key Stage 1 pupils are very eager to show their high quality animated stories.
- By Year 6 pupils have a very good understanding of the need to work safely when accessing the internet. They have a good understanding of the dangers of using social networking sites, 'chat rooms' and text messaging. One pupil told how she lost her mobile phone and immediately informed her parents, family and friends, to ensure that any further messages from her phone were not answered and if a message was received, that a responsible adult was immediately informed.
- ICT is having an excellent impact on raising standards in many subjects. Excellent examples were observed of the planned use of ICT to support literacy, speaking and listening, mathematics, science, history, geography, art, design technology and Japanese. For example, Key Stage 1 pupils use walkie-talkies and a plan of the site, to guide another group of pupils around the infant department. This has an excellent link to speaking and listening, geography, mathematics and the ability to work as team.

Quality of teaching and learning of ICT

The quality of teaching and learning are good.

- Teachers' subject knowledge, and confidence in using ICT for their own professional development, and to support teaching and learning, are good.
- Lessons are well planned and well resourced. Key Stage 1 lessons are very well resourced.

- Key Stage 1 pupils have the opportunity to use computers in the library and the computer suite to independently consolidate their class work.
- Teachers confidently use IWBs, which add impact to lessons and to pupils' interest and motivation. Pupils throughout the school confidently use IWBs. For example, Year 2 pupils were observed dragging and dropping beach wear onto a photo of a pupil, as part of a topic on weather. Year 4 pupils were observed using the IWB to demonstrate addition of three figure numbers, and Year 6 pupils presented their work on the Egyptians and Shakespeare, with great skill, confidence and professionalism.
- Pupils are extremely motivated by the planned activities offered and consequently behaviour in lessons is outstanding.
- Very well informed teaching assistants in the infant department, and the ICT specialist teacher in the junior department, give very good support for group and individual activities in classrooms and in the infant and junior ICT suites.
- Pupils are encouraged to self-review their work against "I can" statements. All spoken to felt that it helps them to understand what they have done well and what they needed to do to improve.

Quality of the curriculum for ICT

The quality of the ICT curriculum is good.

- The quality of the ICT curriculum is good, with outstanding elements in Key Stage 1. The programme of study is taught and planned for very well through the use of a national scheme and a local authority scheme, which have been further adapted by the school. Overall, good links are made between ICT and other subjects of the National Curriculum, which makes learning relevant and enjoyable for pupils. For example, in Key Stage 1 pupils produce animated cartoons. They combine cartoon animation, story writing, appropriate sounds and music to tell the adventures of a farm animal.
- ICT is used well to enable pupils to develop their independent learning and creative thinking skills.
- Resources for the subject are well organised and readily available for pupils to use. In your infant department, you have made space available for a new suite and for a bank of computers in the library, by judicious alterations to the building.
- Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and gifted and talented pupils is very good.
- The well organised ICT club provides good support for pupils with a general or specific interest in ICT, a talent in the subject, or where they do not have access to computers or the internet at home to develop their ICT skills and/or to research for homework.
- Pupils who do not have access to computers and/or the internet at home, or who are absent from school because of illness, are able to borrow a laptop for home use.

Leadership and management of ICT

Leadership and management of ICT are outstanding.

- You, your senior management team and the governing body support the development of ICT extremely well. You have made ICT a focus for the school for the last two years and this is having an excellent impact on standards and achievement. In the Key Stage 1 department there is a tangible buzz and excitement for ICT. In your Key Stage 2 department you have plans to develop the suite so as to build on the initiatives of the infant department.
- The ICT subject leader has made a significant impact in the development of the subject, which is contributing to the rapid rise in standards. She has ensured that the infant department is laying firm foundations for pupils to progress to the junior department.
- Your ICT subject leader ensures that she spends sufficient time at both sites, to be able to monitor and support teaching and learning.
- Your ICT support leader gives very good support for the subject, especially in the junior school.
- Both ICT leaders, and the senior management team, have established excellent links with the independent nursery school on your junior department site. This is developing the continuity of ICT between the nursery and your Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Regular staff training is given to improve the skills and knowledge of teachers and teaching assistants.
- The policy of 'best value' is adhered to very well. New equipment is bought, and building work carried out, on the basis of value for money and the impact is reviewed in relation to pupils' learning.
- Your school development plan (SDP) recognises that the junior department building requires further investment in ICT resources and some capital investment.
- You have recently made significant alterations to the infant department building in order to develop an ICT suite and to gain more room in classrooms. Your mixed Year 1/2 class has been very well equipped with computers so that they have equal access to equipment, as they are not in close proximity to the suite.
- Parents, pupils and staff are very well-informed about the safe use of the internet, through a shared policy and also as a result of a meeting in school led by your ICT leader.
- An 'Appropriate Use' policy for staff use of computers, laptops and data transferred between home and school, is in draft form and ready to be presented to the governors at their next meeting.
- The dated radio link between the site of the infant department and the site of the junior department has recently been updated. This means that you are now well placed to update your server, so that data can be shared between schools and saved and accessed centrally.

Use of Assessment

The use of assessment is satisfactory.

- Regular assessments are made against coverage of the curriculum and the skills demonstrated by pupils.
- Examples of pupils' work are collected so that teachers can refer to examples of levels achieved by pupils.
- Pupils use bright and colourful 'I can' statements to self-assess their work and to inform what they need to do to improve.
- By Year 6, pupils have a good understanding of what they need to do to improve their ICT skills and knowledge. Very good examples were observed in Key Stage 2 of peer assessment, where pupils discussed and marked what was good about their ICT related work and what they needed to do to improve.
- However, pupils do not know what level they are achieving in ICT, and what is required for them to move up a level. You recognise that this is an area for development in your ICT development plan.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- sharing with pupils the levels they are achieving, in order for them to become more aware of how well they are achieving
- developing the provision for ICT in the junior school department
- upgrading the central server in order to make the sharing of information and data, between the two school sites, more accessible for staff and pupils.

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