Ofsted
raising standards
improving lives

24 June 2009

Mrs M J S Lewin
Headteacher
St Godric's RC VA Primary School
Thornley Road
Wheatly Hill
Durham
DH6 3NR

Dear Mrs Lewin

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 11 June 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, a tour of the school by pupils and observation of two part lessons.

The overall effectiveness of ICT was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards in ICT

Achievement is good and standards are broadly in line with national expectations.

- Pupils enter the school with standards in ICT which are below average. Year 6 pupils have made good progress over Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 and they have reached standards which are broadly in line with national expectations.
- Pupils at the end of Year 2 are meeting the standards expected for their age and they have made good progress since they joined the school.

- Pupils are confident users of ICT. They use ICT responsibly and treat the equipment with respect. Pupils are very well behaved when they use ICT, they work well together and are prepared to take turns. In a Year 6 lesson the pupils filmed each other presenting their plays. The pupils filming the productions took their responsibilities seriously and this resulted in good quality footage which enhanced the opportunities for the pupils to review and evaluate their work.
- Pupils spoken to have a basic understanding of how to stay safe when using ICT and new technologies both at home and at school. Year 2 pupils were able to talk about the need to keep their personal details private when they are playing on the internet. They also knew the procedures in the school to be followed if they needed to report a problem. Year 6 pupils confidently spoke about some of the issues they could face when using ICT. The work Year 6 pupils have done in school is complemented by outside agencies such as the police.
- Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) are supported well in lessons. This is because your teaching assistants have good knowledge and understanding of ICT and they work well with the teachers. This means that pupils with LDD make the same good progress as their peers.

Quality of teaching and learning of ICT

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

- Teachers and teaching assistants have good subject knowledge. They understand the requirements of the ICT curriculum and what the pupils need to learn.
- The lessons seen were well planned and well resourced. Interactive whiteboards were used by teachers with confidence, and this enhanced the demonstrations given in the lessons.
- In the Year 2 lesson in particular both the teacher and the teaching assistant constantly reinforced the key ICT vocabulary with the pupils. This meant that by the end of the lesson the pupils understood the vocabulary and were able to use it confidently.
- In the Year 6 lesson ICT supported well the learning needs of the pupils. The use of ICT meant that the pupils were able to integrate ICT, geography and literacy.
- In both lessons teachers used question and answer sessions to good effect. Pupils were encouraged to think about their use of ICT and the advantages and disadvantages of using it.
- All the pupils spoken to in the lessons were motivated by the use of ICT and enjoyed using ICT in their lessons.

Quality of the curriculum for ICT

The curriculum is good.

- The curriculum is designed to ensure that all the pupils receive their statutory entitlement to the National Curriculum. You have also ensured that there are many opportunities for the pupils to develop

their knowledge and understanding of all aspects of ICT. Year 6 pupils for example, were able to speak with confidence about the programming they had done.

- The ICT curriculum is embedded across the school. For example Year 6 were able to complete their work on spreadsheets through their management of the Christmas Fair. This gave the pupils a realistic context for their work and led to one of them declaring 'I think spreadsheets are amazing'.
- In Year 2 the pupils have had the opportunity to work on a short animated film about St Godric's 100 years ago as part of your centenary celebrations this year. The pupils enjoyed the project and the work produced was of good quality.

Leadership and management of ICT

Leadership and management are good.

- You have a good development plan for ICT. This development is linked to an honest, and critical self assessment of ICT and it mainly focuses on improving outcomes for the pupils. These two documents accurately highlight the areas of development for ICT in the school.
- You apply the four principles of best value rigorously. Your ICT co-ordinators are very good are ensuring that the resources purchased are the best value for money and will have an impact on the learning which takes place in the classroom.
- You have identified the training needs of all staff through a simple staff audit. This is being acted upon and training is being provided. This training is developing the ICT knowledge and understanding of staff.
- Your vision for ICT: to enable all, staff, pupils and parents to become confident users of ICT is happening. Staff and pupils, in the lessons seen, were confident users. You are providing courses for ICT for parents to ensure that they are able to use ICT with confidence. Parents spoken too appreciated the opportunities you are giving them and stated that the courses were increasing their confidence and allowing them to support their children's use of ICT at home.
- You have started to populate your virtual learning environment. This is being used in school by staff, but has not been disseminated to pupils.

Use of Assessment

The use of assessment is satisfactory.

- You have introduced recently a new assessment system. This is based on 'levelling' each piece of work according to the National Curriculum levels. The work is self assessed by the pupils and then by the member of staff.
- The system enables the pupils to know what they have done well, what they need to do to improve and what level they are at. The pupils spoken to understood the system and were able to talk about their work and what level they were at.

- However the system is still at an embryonic stage. Pupils do not have targets set for ICT and some of the comments about what pupils have to do to improve are more generic than specific. You are fully aware of this and have in place plans to develop and embed the system in the school.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- ensuring that accurately identified areas for development on your ICT development plan are completed
- developing and embedding the assessment system to support and enhance the pupils' learning.

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

Tanya Harber Stuart
Her Majesty's Inspector