09 June 2009

Mrs B Pierpoint
Principal
Grace Academy
Chapelhouse Road
Chelmsey Wood
Birmingham
B37 5JS

Dear Mrs Pierpoint

Ofsted survey inspection programme – E-safety

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 04 June 2009 to look at work in e-safety.

As outlined in my initial letter, this visit looked at:
- the extent to which schools teach learners to adopt safe and responsible practices in using new technologies
- e-safety training for staff.

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 learners, scrutiny of relevant documentation, and a lesson observation.

The overall effectiveness of e-safety was judged to be satisfactory.

Outcomes for learners

The outcomes for learners are satisfactory.

- The students are kept safe in the academy as a result of secure systems for monitoring information and communication technology usage, clear filtering systems, but most importantly through encouraging a culture of safe usage.
- Satisfactory systems are in place to ban access to inappropriate sites. The system does present opportunities for students to use information communication technology for independent research. However, filtering systems restrict the ability of older students to access sites and

materials required for some examination courses. Whilst there are ways of formally gaining approved access to these sites, students perceive these as too slow, and as a result it limits their research and independent study.

- There is a secure email system for inter-student and student to staff communications; older students engaged in coursework particularly welcomed this facility. The academy is developing an area for secure chat between Years 6 and 7 as part of transition support.
- Occasional inappropriate use of the internet is tackled extremely quickly and disciplinary action taken. As a result students are aware that their information communication technology usage is monitored and they feel safe in using the system.
- Senior staff have a clear understanding of the risks students face in using computer networks whilst on placements and at other schools. There is a reliance on common protocols across Solihull schools and that systems at workplaces will be checked as part of health and safety procedures. However, students reported variations in the rules and expectations between schools. Work experience health and safety checks do not yet sufficiently focus on e-safety.
- Students have a good knowledge of the risks and how to keep safe on the internet and whilst using new technologies. This has been gained through the curriculum, especially the Year 7 'smart' programme, the advice from their peers, the media and their parents. Students in the sixth form do not feel they receive guidance as part of their curriculum, but do have a good knowledge of the issues and how to act safely whilst on-line.

Quality of provision

The quality of provision is satisfactory.

- The curriculum, which is kept up to date in respect to issues of electronic communication and use of the internet provides all students with a grounding in e-safety. It is at its most effective in Year 7. There is provision for all students at Key Stages 3 and 4 to revisit and explore issues of safe, appropriate and reliable use of internet; safe storage of personal information and communication systems.
- There is no systematic provision in the sixth form.
- Curriculum provision is not explicit for those students who arrive mid-year or later in their career, although acceptable use contracts are routinely used.

Leadership and management

The leadership and management of e-safety are satisfactory.

- There is a policy on e-safety, a progression plan, a developing e-safe learning strategy, e-safety filtering solutions guidance and appropriate sections in its anti-bullying policy. Whilst safe practices are part of normal routines, the formal use of the policies still have to embedded

in the work of the academy. Senior staff have a good awareness of what still needs to be done.

- There are plans in place to engage students in reviewing policies and monitoring procedures, however as yet this does not impact on the operation of e-safety systems.
- All, teaching, support and operational, staff have an understanding of the systems to ensure the safe use of information and communication technology. Monitoring software including Lanschool is in place; however there is some inconsistency in its use.
- The leadership and management have been successful in establishing a culture of e-safety amongst students.
- Effective systems are in place to monitor internet use however, data is not yet used strategically to target planning and intervention work with groups of students.
- Records on internet usage by individuals are rigorously kept and used effectively to intervene in instances of inappropriate use of technology. Good liaison with external agencies and parents ensure that any problems that do arise are appropriately dealt with.
- Good support is provided though the pastoral systems to vulnerable students and their families in respect to computer usage at home. Further guidance has been provided to all families through e-learning leaflets and newsletters.

Quality of training

The quality of training is satisfactory.

- Procedures are in place to ensure all staff receive annual safeguarding training. An element of this includes e-safety and anti-bullying guidance. Some staff have received more specialist training; information and communication technology staff and senior staff have a good understanding of the issues which arise in e-safety. Systems to ensure that there similar levels of awareness amongst supply staff and regular contract workers are not in place.
- The academy is aware that systematic training is required in order to ensure that all staff keep up with the changing nature of e-safety issues.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- the strategic use of data to inform e-safety planning and training needs
- to ensure greater consistency in the use of in-class information communication technology monitoring systems across all subject areas
- the development of an age differentiated curriculum to ensure all students receive appropriate and up to date advice, in particular in the sixth form
- the engagement of students in contributing to e-safety monitoring and system development
- the development of filtering systems to allow for more differentiated access to sites by students in order to meet the needs of their courses.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop e-safety in the academy.

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

Paul Lowery
Additional Inspector