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Mr Postlethwaite
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Dear Mr Postlethwaite

Ofsted survey inspection programme – information and communication technology (ICT)

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 3 November 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 use of ICT to support learning across the school.

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 included: interviews with staff and pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; joint observation of three lessons; and a tour of the school by pupils.

The overall effectiveness of ICT was judged to be inadequate.

Achievement in ICT

Achievement in ICT is satisfactory.

- Pupils arrive at the school with ICT skills and capability which are broadly in line with national expectations. The links with feeder infant schools help pupils to adapt quickly to the new computer system at Victoria Junior School and their learning is not disrupted. By the end of Year 6, pupils have made satisfactory progress and they leave the school with levels of attainment which are broadly in line with the national average.

- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported in lessons by teaching assistants. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together and this enables these pupils to make the same satisfactory progress as their peers.
- In the lessons observed, pupils worked well together. They supported each other and were prepared to help each other. They respected the equipment, each other and all the adults in the class.
- Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of how to keep themselves safe while using new technologies. The assemblies, lessons, and simple but effective rules for using the internet support their learning.

Quality of teaching

Quality of teaching in ICT is inadequate.

- Teachers manage ICT lessons well. They have good subject knowledge. However, the lessons tended to focus on the pupils completing tasks rather than on developing and improving their work.
- In September 2009, the assessment system was put in place. This system monitors the pupils and shows whether they can perform an ICT skill. However, the assessment of the pupils' skills focuses on what they can and can not do. It does not focus on what the pupils need to do to improve their ICT knowledge and understanding. This means that there is a focus on completing tasks rather than on developing the pupils' ICT capability. Pupils do not know what level they are at and do not know how they could improve their work. ICT assessment is, therefore, inadequate and this limits pupils' attainment.

Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum in ICT is satisfactory.

- You have ensured that the pupils receive a broad and balanced ICT curriculum. All aspects of the National Curriculum are covered and the pupils are able to develop their knowledge and understanding of data-logging and sequencing and control as well as communication and presenting information. In addition, some year groups have the opportunity to develop their animation skills and are proud of their animated films.
- You also offer pupils the opportunity to develop their ICT skills outside the classroom. For example, you offer a computer club for girls.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in ICT

The effectiveness of leadership and management in ICT is satisfactory.

- You and your ICT team have an accurate view of ICT at the school. Various initiatives are in place to support the pupils' learning in ICT. These

include: a new assessment system; provision of additional laptops in all year groups; staff training and a focus on e-safety at school and home. However, the majority of these initiatives are very recent, in some cases they have been in place for less than a term, and their impact on teaching and pupils' attainment is limited.

The use of ICT across the curriculum

The use of ICT across the curriculum is inadequate.

- ICT is used across the school to develop learning in other subjects. This includes the use of interactive whiteboards and laptops as well as the ICT suite.
- However, the inadequate assessment of ICT in the school means that not all staff are aware of what the pupils are capable of when using ICT. This means that the ICT parts of lessons do not challenge the pupils. Therefore, when they use ICT across the curriculum, they repeat the skills they have already learnt. There is also too much focus on the use of ICT to present their work in other subjects in a neater way rather than on challenging the pupils to make better progress.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- developing the use of the assessment system to ensure that:
 - outcomes for pupils are improved
 - all staff know what pupils are able to achieve in ICT
- improving teaching by:
 - focusing on enabling pupils to develop their ICT knowledge and understanding rather than on completing tasks
 - ensuring that all pupils know how they could improve their ICT work
- using ICT across the curriculum to challenge the pupils to make better progress.

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