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Mrs J Powell
Acting Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Powell

Ofsted 2009-10 subject survey inspection programme: information and communication technology (ICT)

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and pupils, during my visit on 23 March 2010 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 in other subjects.

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.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included interviews with staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work, observation of two lessons and a tour of the school with pupils.

The overall effectiveness of ICT is inadequate.

Achievement in ICT

Achievement in ICT is inadequate.

- Pupils' capabilities in using technology are assessed during the Early Years Foundation Stage. This shows attainment on entry to be broadly average. Attainment is not systematically assessed from then on and so the school is unable to show what the standards are in ICT at Key Stage 1 or 2. A scrutiny of pupils' work shows that they make satisfactory progress in some aspects, such as using ICT to communicate and present their ideas. However, as significant elements of the ICT National Curriculum are not taught at all, achievement overall is inadequate.

- Attitudes to learning and behaviour are good. Pupils are encouraged to work independently using ICT where possible and are increasingly able to do so.
- Pupils have a satisfactory awareness of how to keep themselves safe when using the internet.

Quality of teaching in ICT

The quality of teaching and assessment in ICT is inadequate.

- In the lessons visited, teachers had good subject knowledge and classroom management skills.
- The quality of teaching observed was satisfactory, and at times good, enabling pupils to make at least satisfactory progress.
- However, pupils' work in ICT is not marked or assessed. This means pupils are unsure of how well they are doing and lack guidance on how they might improve their work. It also means teachers are unaware of how individual pupils are doing which makes it difficult for them to prepare a range of tasks appropriate to pupils' different starting points.

Quality of the curriculum in ICT

The quality of the curriculum in ICT is inadequate.

- The school is in the process of developing a new curriculum which embeds the use of ICT through a topic-based approach. There are plentiful opportunities for pupils to use ICT to communicate and present their ideas. The opportunity for pupils to use spreadsheets and databases is currently limited to just some year groups. This hinders the rate at which pupils acquire new skills in data-handling. There is insufficient provision for pupils to develop their programming capabilities or to use data-logging equipment. Hence, the curriculum has significant deficiencies and does not meet statutory requirements.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in ICT

The effectiveness of the leadership and management in ICT is inadequate.

- The school has been through a turbulent period and has rightly prioritised improving other aspects of its performance before dealing with the significant issues it faces in ICT. School leaders are well aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the ICT provision and are positioned well to tackle them. In the last year, a number of improvements have been made in raising the quality of teaching and learning and in curriculum planning. The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve.
- Although leadership is satisfactory, management of ICT has been and remains inadequate. Pupils are not set targets in the subject and their work is not assessed or tracked. Consequently, the school does not know whether individual pupils are making appropriate progress and is unable to

provide individualised support to help pupils, identified as underachieving, to catch up.

- There are insufficient ICT resources for the pupils and no rolling replacement programme to update old machines. The severe lack of resources partly explains why the curriculum is inadequate and is severely limiting pupils' achievement.

The use of ICT to support learning in other subjects

The use of ICT to support learning in other subjects is inadequate.

- Most computers for pupils' use are located in a computer room. There is very limited access to ICT in classrooms which restricts the role ICT can play in improving learning in other subjects. Some Year 6 pupils complained about having first to 'type up' the work they had written when they went to the computer room.
- There are instances of ICT being used well to improve learning in some year groups. In Year 4, pupils wrote and recorded their own dialogue over an animated film version of 'Watership Down' from which the soundtrack had been removed. This helped pupils in learning to write persuasive dialogue for an audience. Similarly, Year 5 pupils scripted and recorded their own animation using time-lapse cameras and malleable models of their characters. However, overall, the use of ICT to improve learning in other subjects is inadequate.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring pupils' work in ICT is assessed and tracked so that their progress towards challenging targets can be monitored and extra support provided for those identified as underachieving
- providing the full statutory ICT National Curriculum programme of study at all key stages
- providing sufficient ICT resources for pupils to use in their classrooms so that they can be used to improve their learning in other subjects.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop ICT in the school.

As I explained previously, 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

David Anstead
Her Majesty's Inspector