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Mrs S Mansfield  
Headteacher  
Titus Salt School  
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Dear Mrs Mansfield

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 students, during my visit on 26 and 27 January 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 students; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of students' work; and observation of 12 part-lessons, including four joint observations; and a tour of the school by students.

The overall effectiveness of ICT is good.

Achievement in ICT

Achievement in ICT is good.

- Students enter the school with attainment in ICT which is below the national average. By the end of Key Stage 3, attainment is broadly average and progress is good. Students continue to make good progress at Key Stage 4 in almost all aspects of ICT. However, some students make only satisfactory progress in aspects such as programming and control. By the time students leave the school at the end of Year 11, attainment at

grades A\* to C is in line with the national average but more students achieve an A grade than would be expected nationally. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well in lessons and they make the same good progress as their peers.

- In the sixth form, students in 2009 made inadequate progress. This was recognised by the school and strategies were put in place to bring about improvement. These have impacted positively on students' achievement, which is now at least satisfactory.
- Students have a good age-related knowledge and understanding of how to keep themselves safe when using new technologies. Students behave well when they are using ICT, they respect the equipment and handle it with care.

#### Quality of teaching in ICT

The quality of teaching in ICT is satisfactory.

- Teachers have secure subject knowledge. New technologies are used well to support learning. Planning, based on the whole-school planning sheet, is secure.
- However, in some lessons, students are all asked to complete the same task. This means that some of the students struggle to finish the task whereas others are able to complete it very quickly.
- In lessons, teachers use questioning to assess the students' progress. Written assessment is clear and accurate, and indicates to the students what they need to do to improve their work. However, the written assessment does not always contribute to the planning of the lessons.

#### Quality of the curriculum in ICT

The quality of the curriculum in ICT is good.

- In Key Stage 3, students cover the statutory ICT National Curriculum. There are good links between different subjects and ICT to develop learning. Students are given the opportunity through personal development days to link ICT and design technology through a 'robot wars' competition.
- At Key Stage 4, all students study core ICT. In addition, students can choose to study ICT in more depth. The courses offered meet the students' needs and interests. As well as the numerous opportunities for them to study programming and control in both ICT and across the curriculum, all students at Key Stage 4 participate in a forensic science day with Bradford University to study these areas. There are also numerous extra-curriculum opportunities for the students to use ICT and complete their ICT work.
- In the sixth form, the curriculum has recently been changed in response to concerns about students' progress in the past. The new course is enabling

students who take ICT to make at least satisfactory progress and is more suited to their needs and interests.

## Effectiveness of leadership and management in ICT

The effectiveness of leadership and management in ICT is good.

- The ICT department's self-evaluation is comprehensive and accurately highlights the areas for development. The ICT department, as part of the specialist computing status, supports some of the feeder primary schools by teaching the control unit of the ICT National Curriculum at Key Stage 2.
- Leadership and management of the IT Diploma are good. The support from the local authority is welcomed. Students are enjoying the course and are developing both their IT skills and capabilities. The collaboration between the college and the school is developing their independence.
- Value for money is good. Of particular note was the extensive consultation with the students and staff about purchasing ICT equipment for the new building. In addition, the school council still plays a vital part in agreeing some of the ICT expenditure.
- The staff receive extensive training with respect to ICT. Staff appreciate this and are confident users of ICT and able to support the students well.

Subject issue: the use of ICT to support learning in other subjects

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

- There are extensive opportunities for the students to use ICT across the school. New technologies are freely available for students to use at any time. This is developing their independent learning skills.
- The students' use of ICT across the curriculum ensures that they all cover the ICT statutory National Curriculum. However, the monitoring and assessment of this work are more focused on the subject knowledge rather than the development of the students' ICT capabilities. This means that although the work and assessment are passed to the ICT department, the monitoring and assessment are insufficient to ensure that students make good progress in all aspects of ICT.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- developing further the monitoring and assessment of students across the curriculum in ICT to ensure that they make good progress in all aspects
- improving the teaching of ICT through:
  - better use of assessment
  - providing students with tasks which meet their needs and interests.

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