

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



17 February 2010

Mrs S Allen
Headteacher
Clare Mount Specialist Sports College
Fender Lane
Moreton
Wirral
Merseyside
CH46 9PA

Dear Mrs Allen

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 10 and 11 February 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; observation of 10 lessons; and seven short visits to other lessons.

The overall effectiveness of ICT is outstanding.

Achievement in ICT

Achievement in ICT is outstanding.

- Students' ICT capability is assessed on entry to the school and is well below average. Almost all students achieve an Entry Level ICT qualification at the highest level by the end of Key Stage 4. This represents exceptional progress for all students. Extra-curricular activities, the sports specialism and home use also contribute to students' outstanding achievement in ICT. Students become increasingly independent in their use of ICT as they move through the school. They learn to make choices with respect to their ICT use and understand the importance of reviewing and improving their work.

- A minority of post-16 students take the double GCSE award in either Year 12 or Year 13, depending on their readiness to access the qualification. They all achieve grades above normal expectations. This represents outstanding achievement.
- Students are taught how to stay safe when using new technologies and display very good levels of understanding in this area. Safety issues are covered each year in ICT lessons. This area of work is further supported by visiting speakers, assemblies, prominent displays around school and the partnership with parents. Students have excellent attitudes to learning and their behaviour is outstanding.

Quality of teaching in ICT

The quality of teaching in ICT is good.

- Teaching is good and, in some lessons, outstanding. Teachers have good subject knowledge. Assessment information is used very well to plan lessons to meet the specific learning needs of each student. Activities are designed to be accessible, challenging and interesting, so that students are always actively involved in their learning. Lessons are highly structured and well paced so that every minute of learning time is used to develop students' ICT skills and capability as well as foster their confidence and independence. However, on a few occasions, opportunities are missed to exemplify or demonstrate concepts to help students make links between the activities.
- Students receive considerable verbal feedback on their work. At Key Stage 3, students are aware of their progress through 'can do' statements. Older students receive effective written feedback on where they are and what they need to do to improve their work.
- Students make good use of a wide range of software resources and gain confidence in the use of digital and video cameras. Their progress is thoroughly assessed against the National Curriculum and monitored against their challenging targets. This information is used very effectively by teachers in other subjects when planning their use of ICT in lessons and to identify where additional support or provision is needed.

Quality of the curriculum in ICT

The quality of the curriculum in ICT is outstanding.

- The outstanding curriculum meets the school's aims for all students to develop the skills and knowledge for adult life. This is done through units of work that meet all the statutory requirements for ICT. Students receive one taught hour of ICT a week at Key Stages 3 and 4, and up to three hours a week at post-16 level. The curriculum is broadened and reinforced through the wide-ranging use of ICT in other subjects. For example, exceptional real-life experiences in data-logging, control and data-handling are provided through the sports specialism.

- At Key Stage 3, the curriculum has been skilfully modified to provide age-related learning materials that meet students' specific learning needs and interests. These include access to computer-aided design and manufacturing facilities at a nearby city learning centre. Cross-curricular themes involving music and design technology provide memorable experiences. At Key Stage 4, students follow an Entry Level Certificate that enables them to gain a qualification in ICT. Additional units of study include spreadsheets and programming, the components of a computer and e-safety. These provide excellent enhancement opportunities. The Key Stage 4 curriculum leads to the GCSE course for students over the age of 16.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in ICT

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

- There is a clear and articulate vision that ICT is a key tool for breaking down the many barriers that students experience in their learning. As a result, ICT makes an outstanding contribution to their achievement in all subjects and life skills. There is a highly cohesive approach to ICT through the leadership of taught ICT and its coordination across the curriculum. All aspects of development, including staff development and the implementation of the virtual learning platform, are very well documented and based on rigorous self-review. This, together with clear lines of accountability for all aspects of ICT leadership, provides outstanding capacity for further improvement.

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

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

- The students' use of ICT in other subjects is carefully mapped and monitored to reinforce and develop their ICT skills and capabilities in all subjects. Teachers have an excellent awareness of when and how to use ICT in lessons in line with students' current ICT capabilities. For example, the use of ICT to graph the results of an experiment removed learning barriers, enabling the teacher to focus students on the scientific concepts being taught.
- The use of ICT is extremely varied and is planned well to provide wide ranging experiences that promote learning across the curriculum. As one student said, 'ICT makes learning easier'. For example, learning about the First World War was brought to life through a web-conference with a 'soldier in the trenches'.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- continuing to improve ICT provision and its use across the curriculum as identified in your development plans.

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

Angela Corbett
Her Majesty's Inspector