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Mrs R Swailes
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Dear Mrs Swailes

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 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 you, your ICT leader, Year 2 and Year 6 pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; observation of a Year 1 and a Year 4 lesson; and a tour of the school, with a focus on ICT, given by four Year 6 pupils.

The overall effectiveness of ICT is inadequate.

Achievement in ICT

Achievement in ICT is inadequate.

■ Pupils' ICT capabilities are not assessed on entry and are not monitored, assessed and levelled to Year 6. Therefore, it is not possible for teachers to make an accurate assessment of pupils' attainment and achievement in ICT.

■ Discussion with pupils and analysis of their work show that attainment is below expectations by Year 6.

- By Year 6, pupils have a good understanding of the need to work safely and appropriately when using the internet and social networking sites.

Quality of teaching in ICT

The quality of teaching in ICT is inadequate.

- There is no assessment of ICT. Therefore, teachers are unable to plan activities which are well-matched to different groups of pupils, including gifted and talented and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result, progress in lessons, and over time, is inadequate.
- Although the objectives for the subject content of a lesson, for example English or mathematics, are shared with pupils, the objectives and success criteria for the ICT elements are not. Therefore, pupils do not know what they are aiming to achieve in ICT during lessons or over time.
- In the lessons observed, pupils were eager to do well and to support each other to overcome difficulties and new challenges. However, where challenge is insufficiently matched to their capabilities, they become restless and bored and quickly lose interest in the task.
- The subject knowledge of teachers and teaching assistants ranges from inadequate to good but is inadequate overall.

Quality of the curriculum in ICT

The quality of the curriculum in ICT is inadequate.

- The pupils are not receiving their entitlement to the statutory ICT National Curriculum. In particular pupils do not have the opportunity to log data or develop their control/programming/sequencing skills and capability.
- Schemes of work are in place but they are not used systematically to ensue that the pupils make even satisfactory progress.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in ICT

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

- Historically, leadership and management of ICT have not had a high profile. Therefore, they have not had a significant impact on the development of teaching and learning in ICT and on the attainment and achievement of pupils.
- The ICT leader has not had sufficient training to manage and lead the subject. This has resulted in an inaccurate and over-optimistic view of teaching, learning and pupils' attainment and achievement.
- There has been no audit of the ICT skills of staff to support the development of their knowledge and skills through training.

- The virtual learning environment is now available for staff, pupils and parents to use, but it is still very much in its infancy.

- Following your appointment from September 2009, you have very quickly identified the strengths and weaknesses of the school and the priorities for development. You have rightly focused on raising standards in English and mathematics. However, you have made sure that your ICT leader has written a very comprehensive development plan to ensure that, by the end of this academic year, the curriculum is fully in place and planning is sufficiently focused on improving teaching and raising attainment.

- You have made very effective use of the support of the local authority to start to develop ICT.

The use of ICT to support learning in other subjects

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

- Where teachers have confidence in using ICT, it is having a satisfactory impact on raising standards, especially in English. Pupils are aware of how ICT supports English, mathematics and art. However, the limited planned opportunities for using ICT across the curriculum mean that its impact on other subjects is inconsistent and inadequate overall.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- raising attainment and improving achievement in ICT by eliminating inadequate teaching

- introducing and embedding assessment, so that pupils' attainment and achievement can be monitored and planning can be supported

- ensuring that the ICT curriculum is fully resourced

- ensuring that the subject leader is given support and training to be able to carry out the role of developing ICT across the school.

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

Anthony Green
Additional Inspector