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Mrs T A Lewyckyj  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Lewyckyj

Ofsted 2010-11 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 22 and 23 April 2010 to look at work in ICT.

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, seven of which were joint observations; short visits to four other lessons; and a tour of the school with students.

The overall effectiveness of ICT is inadequate.

#### Achievement in ICT

Achievement in ICT is inadequate because of the lack of progress made by the 40% of students in Key Stage 4 who do not follow ICT courses.

- Students enter the school with ICT levels of attainment which are above the national average. By the end of Key Stage 3, they have made satisfactory progress and their levels of attainment are above average.
- In Key Stage 4, students can choose to study ICT in more depth and acquire a vocational qualification. The students who do so reach levels of attainment which are above average and this represents satisfactory progress, given their starting points. There is a rising trend of attainment in the vocational qualification and some students are now making good progress. In the past, higher attaining students did not make the progress they should. The department recognised this and put successful strategies

in place to improve their attainment. These students are now making satisfactory progress.

- At Key Stage 4, 40% of students choose not to study ICT. This means that, although they do use ICT in other subjects, their experiences are mainly focused on presenting information and communicating. In the other aspects of ICT, which they do not experience, they make inadequate progress.
- Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported in a variety of ways to develop their ICT skills and capabilities and make the same progress as their peers.
- Students' knowledge of how to be safe when using new technologies is satisfactory. They are supported to develop their knowledge through lessons, assemblies and visits by outside agencies.

#### Quality of teaching in ICT

The quality of teaching in ICT is satisfactory.

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and are confident users of ICT. Lessons are well organised and planned. Teachers help individual students well and relationships between the staff and students are good.
- In too many lessons, there is too much teacher talk. This slows the pace of the lessons and does not enable the students to make better than satisfactory progress. Often, students are all asked to complete the same work which means that for some it is too easy and for others too hard.

#### Quality of the curriculum in ICT

The quality of the curriculum is inadequate.

- At Key Stage 3, the curriculum for ICT is broad and balanced.
- At Key Stage 4, students who do not choose to study ICT do not receive their full entitlement to the statutory ICT National Curriculum. This means that they are unable to make progress in the aspects which they do not study. The curriculum is therefore inadequate.

#### Effectiveness of leadership and management in ICT

The effectiveness of leadership and management is satisfactory.

- The school has a newly formed and very clear vision for ICT which has driven the recent extensive upgrade of ICT resources. The principles of best value are adhered to. In particular, the students are fully consulted when purchasing new technologies.
- The leaders and managers are fully aware of the issues with the curriculum. Some plans are in place to resolve these concerns but it is too early to judge the impact on outcomes for students.

- Training is provided for all staff to ensure that they are up to date with the use of the new resources. Staff appreciate this training and it has enabled them to become confident users of ICT.

The use of ICT to support learning in other subjects

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

- ICT is used in nearly all lessons. This use motivates and engages the students and enables them to develop their learning. For example, in Spanish, interactive whiteboards are used very effectively to improve the pace of the lesson and develop students' understanding of the target language. In PE, the simple but highly effective use of digital video cameras enables students to conduct self-reviews and develop their coaching skills.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring that all students make at least satisfactory progress by:
  - focusing all staff on how the use of ICT will improve outcomes for all students, especially those not studying ICT at Key Stage 4
  - systematically monitoring and reviewing the impact of ICT on outcomes for students
  - developing the curriculum to ensure that all students receive their entitlement to the statutory ICT National Curriculum
- improving the quality of teaching by:
  - reducing the amount of teacher talk
  - ensuring that students are given appropriate tasks.

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 under the unique reference number for your school. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Tanya Harber Stuart  
Her Majesty's Inspector