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Miss P Williams
Headteacher
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Dear Miss Williams

Ofsted 2010-11 subject survey inspection programme: information and communication technology (ICT)

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and students, during my visit on 10 and 11 May 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; joint observation of 10 part-lessons, and a tour of the school with students.

The overall effectiveness of ICT is outstanding.

Achievement in ICT

Achievement in ICT is outstanding.

- Students enter the school with levels of ICT attainment which are broadly in line with the national average. At the end of Year 11, students reach levels of attainment which are well above the national average and make outstanding progress. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive excellent support in the classroom from very well-trained Learning Support Assistants. These students make outstanding progress in developing their ICT skills and capability.
- Students are supported well through the curriculum and other activities to develop very good knowledge and understanding of how to stay safe when using new technologies. Governors are fully involved in the monitoring of the e-safety policy. In addition, parents are also supported to ensure they understand how to enable their children to become confident and safe users of new technologies.

- Students' behaviour when using new technologies is outstanding. They respect the equipment and help and support each other to learn.

Quality of teaching in ICT

The quality of teaching in ICT is good with outstanding features.

- Lessons are well planned. All staff have good subject knowledge and they use this to plan activities which engage and motivate the students.
- Assessment is good. Students are given clear guidance on what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. This is communicated regularly to parents.
- ICT is used extremely well across the school to develop the teaching of, and learning in, other subjects. All staff are exceptionally confident in their use of ICT. ICT increases the pace of lessons to ensure that students make at least good, and often outstanding, progress. In addition, ICT helps the students to work collaboratively.

Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum in ICT is outstanding.

- The curriculum is reviewed regularly, and updated where necessary, to ensure it is the most appropriate it can be for the students. This proactive approach to the curriculum contributes to students' outstanding progress.
- All the students receive their full entitlement to the statutory ICT National Curriculum during ICT lessons. In addition, students have very high-quality opportunities to use ICT in all subjects. These opportunities enable them to develop their personal skills and also challenge them to work both quickly and accurately.

Leadership and management of ICT

The leadership and management of ICT are outstanding.

- The vision for ICT is highly effective: students are to become safe and independent users of new technologies, and ICT has to enhance the learning in every lesson.
- Much well-planned and engaging training has been provided for all staff. This training is highly appreciated by the staff and has enhanced their ICT knowledge and understanding. All staff are confident users of ICT and know when, and when not, to use it.
- The principles of best value are adhered to. In particular, the students were fully involved in decisions about the purchase of ICT equipment for the new building. Leaders and managers were proactive in the new build and designed furniture to enable ICT to be integrated into learning in all areas of the school.
- The standard of self-review and evaluation is exceptional. A constant cycle of review, evaluation and action, particularly to teaching and learning,

applies; this has led to students' outstanding progress. Leaders and managers are fully aware of departmental strengths and areas for improvement and have well-considered plans for further developing ICT.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring that the well considered plans for ICT are implemented.

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 URN 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