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Dear Mr Witham

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

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 26 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 pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of two lessons, two short visits to the Early Years Foundation Stage and a tour of the school with pupils.

The overall effectiveness of ICT is good.

Achievement in ICT

Achievement in ICT is good.

■ Pupils enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with attainment which is well below average and, for some pupils, exceptionally below average. By the end of Year 6, pupils leave the school with levels of attainment which are below average. However, given the pupils' starting points, they make good progress in the development of their ICT skills and capability.

■ Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well by teachers and learning support assistants and make the same good progress as their peers. Staff provide helpful resources in lessons to give these pupils full access to the curriculum.

■ The relationships between staff and pupils are good. Pupils treat the ICT equipment, each other and adults with respect.

- Pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of how to keep themselves safe while using new technologies. They are supported on the topic through assemblies and lessons.

Quality of teaching in ICT

The quality of teaching in ICT is good.

- Teachers and learning support assistants have good ICT knowledge. They use this to good effect when planning their lessons, which have a brisk pace and a variety of activities to engage and motivate the pupils. Key vocabulary is used constantly and pupils are able to use it accurately.

- However, sometimes opportunities are missed for pupils to support each other in lessons. This means that pupils rely on the teacher and the learning support assistant even when their peers know the answers. As a result, some pupils have to wait to be seen and this slows the pace of the lessons.

- Pupils' assessment in lessons is good. Good use is made of peer- and self-assessment. However, the written feedback given to pupils is inconsistent. Although some of it is good and clearly enables the pupils to understand what they have to do to improve, not all feedback is of this standard.

Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum in ICT is good.

- The planning of the curriculum is thorough. All pupils receive their entitlement to the statutory ICT National Curriculum. However, the leaders and managers recognise that the use of data-logging is less well developed than other aspects of the subject.

- The ICT curriculum is imaginative. In particular, the 'thrills and spills' project enabled the pupils, through a visit to the local fair, to develop their use of spreadsheets, their communication skills and their knowledge and understanding of programming, sequencing and control. The effective embedding of ICT into the whole-school curriculum allows pupils to learn, and then apply their ICT skills in relevant and stimulating topics.

- Pupils appreciate the opportunity to attend a computer club in school.

Leadership and management of ICT

The leadership and management of ICT are good.

- ICT is led well. There is a clear and effective vision: ICT is there to support learning and raise attainment in all subjects.

- Staff are enthusiastic about using ICT in their lessons and its use is embedded across all subjects. A systematic and rigorous monitoring process is in place so that all staff are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of ICT. Plans are in place to ensure that the weaknesses are tackled.

- Governors are involved through a link-governor scheme and have agreed the ICT policies.
- Staff have received training on keeping the pupils, and themselves safe, while using new technologies.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- improving teaching by developing further by encouraging pupils to support each other's learning
- ensuring that all written assessment is at least good and enables pupils to understand exactly what they have to do to improve their work
- improving the curriculum by embedding further the use of data-logging across subjects.

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