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31 December 2007

Mrs Dickinson
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Dickinson

Ofsted survey inspection programme of primary schools: Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 6 December to look at work in ICT. As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of ICT, the visit had a particular focus on the impact of ICT on whole-school improvement.

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. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included: interviews with you and your staff as well as discussions with pupils in Year 2 and Year 6, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observations of three part lessons.

The overall effectiveness of ICT was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in ICT are good.

- Pupils make good progress in ICT from a low starting point.
- Clear leadership good teaching and a good curriculum focused on progression of skills and understanding are contributing to pupils achieving standards that are good by the end of Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe when using ICT; this includes their use of the internet, although this is better for pupils in Year 6 than for those in Year 2.

- Pupils in Year 6 are able to produce multi-media presentations which include images and sounds. They use search engines as well as the range of software available to them with confidence.
- The use of ICT helps pupils to develop their listening skills; it also contributes extremely well to their behaviour, personal development and well-being. A good example was seen in Year 2, with pupils taking turns and working well together to create a bar chart to depict pupils' favourite fruit.

Quality of teaching and learning of ICT

Teaching and learning in ICT are good.

- Teachers show good subject knowledge and make good use of interactive whiteboards (IWBs) to demonstrate new learning.
- Good teaching uses ICT to add to the normal repertoire of effective teaching strategies.
- Every class has its own file on the main server and pupils appreciate being able to save and retrieve their work from their electronic folders. However, strategies to ensure that pupils can progress independently are sometimes limited.
- Daily planning does not always include sufficient detail about how higher attainers will be challenged or information about the small steps required for the least able.
- Teaching of key vocabulary is satisfactory, but some pupils struggle to articulate what they are learning using correct terminology.
- Pupils enjoy using ICT; younger pupils say that it turns learning into a game and older pupils appreciate the ease and speed with which they can access information and produce high quality work. For pupils who arrive with poor attitudes to learning, teachers noted that ICT helps to transform their behaviour and their wish to learn.
- Opportunities are sometimes missed to use ICT to develop further the youngest pupils' communication, language and literacy skills.

Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- The school ensures the curriculum for ICT covers all the programmes of study and planning makes good reference to links between ICT and other subjects. These links are good, and are improving. However, they are not equally well embedded for all subjects in both key stages.
- The school makes effective use of its resources to support the curriculum, although resourcing for the Nursery and for pupils in the specialist unit is limited.
- Where ICT resources are being used particularly well, this is helping pupils to develop into independent learners who take pride in being creative.

Leadership and management of ICT

Leadership and management of ICT are good.

- The leadership and management of ICT are strengthened by the support of the senior leadership team, by the development of a shared vision for ICT which is understood by the school community and by clear coordination to develop ICT capability across the school.
- Training needs are identified as a result of performance management. Consequently, staff are more confident at using ICT and use IWBs effectively to enhance teaching and learning.
- ICT is used as an effective management tool, such as in managing information about pupils efficiently and effectively and challenging underperformance. It also provides access for staff, parents and pupils to key aspects of the school's work, for example, informing parents through the school website about what is being taught and how they can support their children.
- Monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning of ICT is satisfactory and improving, for example in the sharper focus on learning, progress and standards.

Subject issue - the impact of ICT on whole-school improvement

The subject's contribution to whole-school improvement is satisfactory.

- The greatest impact of ICT is in mathematics from the Nursery to Year 6. Pupils would welcome the use of laptops for class-based lessons and would like more opportunities to use ICT in English, science and art.
- Nearly all the classrooms have an IWB connected to the internet. The use of these is leading to more good teaching.
- The senior leadership team ensures that investment in ICT represents good value for money.
- ICT is used effectively as a management tool by all staff for planning, preparation, tracking and monitoring.
- ICT facilitates cross-curricular links which enables older pupils to bring together a range of skills and knowledge. This enhances their learning and improves the quality of their work. In a Year 6 lesson, for example, pupils produced a PowerPoint presentation about their work on the Anglo Saxon, including images downloaded from the internet, sound and basic animation, and good writing.
- The coordinators with responsibility for subjects other than ICT do not have ICT within their remit. As a result, there is insufficient reference to ICT as a strategy to promote whole-school improvement, even though it is clearly having an impact in some areas of learning.
- Although the school has collected information about pupils' access to ICT at home, staff have not used this information to prioritise access to ICT for the most disadvantaged pupils.

Inclusion

The subject's contribution to the inclusion of pupils is good with some outstanding features.

- ICT is used very well to support pupils for whom English is an additional language. The appropriate use of images from around the world reflects not just the school's different cultures, but also enhances pupils' comprehension.
- Aspects of ICT are being used well to support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, the range of ICT resources is limited and those available are not always used to best effect.
- Non-specialist staff working with pupils from the language unit do not always receive sufficient guidance to ensure they enable pupils to use ICT as successfully as they could.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included the need to:

- ensure daily planning takes full account of different ability groups, includes sufficient challenge for higher attainers, clear small steps for pupils with learning difficulties, and strategies which promote independent learning
- ensure key vocabulary is taught explicitly, that pupils are encouraged to use key words to talk about their work and that greater use is made of ICT to develop pupils' communication, language and literacy skills in the Nursery
- embed ICT across the curriculum more fully by increasing the provision of and access to ICT and including it within the remit of subject coordinators
- ensure that pupils who do not have access to ICT at home are a priority for access to ICT in school.

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

Gehane Gordelier
Her Majesty's Inspector