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Mrs C Pryer
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Dear Mrs Pryer

**Ofsted survey inspection programme of secondary schools 2007/8
Information and Communication Technology (ICT)**

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during
my visit on the 30-31 October 2007 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 quality of the assessment of 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. 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
staff and learners, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of students'
work and observation of four lessons.

The overall effectiveness of ICT was judged to be outstanding.

Achievement and standards

Overall achievement and standards are good and improving.

- Pupils join the school in Year 5 with average skills in ICT and by the
  time they leave at the end of Year 8 their standard of attainment is
  above the national average. This represents good achievement and for
  those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities their
  achievement is outstanding.
- Pupils are highly competent when using ICT independently to solve
  problems and present information. They draw on their own
  experiences of ICT to develop individualised, creative solutions of high
  quality.

- Pupils are given a wide range of opportunities to develop their ICT capability creatively in a range of contexts in all subject areas. ICT clearly has a positive impact on raising standards across the curriculum.
- There has been a period of change over the last two years and standards in ICT are still rising rapidly as a result.

## Quality of teaching and learning of ICT

The quality of teaching and learning in ICT is good and improving.

- The ICT subject leader has extensive knowledge of her subject and uses this effectively to support staff across the school. Planning identifies the skills that staff need to deliver ICT lessons effectively and appropriate professional development is provided to develop these.
- All lessons observed were good and most had some outstanding features. In one lesson pupils were given an activity that required the creative use of new multi media software. They quickly explored the features of the application and produced high quality multi media story openings with dramatic impact.
- In all the lessons observed the pupils behaved well and showed high levels of motivation and enthusiasm for their work in ICT.
- Lessons are very well planned providing pupils with a wide range of opportunities to develop their ICT capability in context. Exceptional care is taken to make sure that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities access the full range of learning experiences.

## Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the ICT curriculum is outstanding.

- The ICT scheme of work is exceptionally well designed with enough detail to be supportive to staff but at the same time providing good opportunities for creative, independent work by pupils.
- Planning across all subjects identifies opportunities for the use of ICT to enhance learning and develop ICT capability. The more technical aspects of ICT such as data logging and modelling are well embedded in subject areas. In one lesson pupils used an ICT model to trial an electrical circuit prior to producing an illuminating key fob.
- There is considerable enrichment to the curriculum through a range of high level projects and a summer school. An environmental project, (dott 07) provides pupils with an exciting context for developing information handling skills and an international e-mail exchange with African pupils.
- The range of software available for pupils has been carefully considered to provide all pupils with good access. An example of this is the use of 'Dreamweaver' by higher attaining pupils for web authoring whereas lower attaining pupils are provided with Word or Publisher for a similar activity.

Leadership and management of ICT

Leadership and management are outstanding.

- The ICT subject leader, with your support, provides outstanding leadership resulting in rapidly improving standards in ICT. Subject documentation is thorough, detailed and reviewed regularly. Considerable effort has gone into improving the Internet safety policy recently. The leadership team routinely seek out best practice locally and nationally to steer changes.
- There is a clear vision for the creative use of ICT across the curriculum to improve pupil motivation and raise standards. This is shared and understood by all staff. The cross curricular use of ICT is highly effective and continuing to improve. Resources have been recently improved to increase pupil access and are now good.
- Self evaluation has informed development planning and this process is being refined and improved with the recent use of the Becta ICT self review framework. The school has a clear idea of strengths and areas for development.
- Over the last two years the administrative network has been improved to enable pupil tracking and target setting systems to be set up. This now enables timely intervention to support pupils' progress. The expertise of the local authority has underpinned this process.

Subject issue - the impact of the ICT curriculum offer on student achievement

- The ICT curriculum supports the raising attainment agenda well. Pupils enjoy their work in ICT and are highly motivated by it. They behave responsibly and with consideration for each other when using ICT. The standards of achievement are good and improving and ICT is integral to this process.
- The outstanding design of the ICT curriculum enables pupils of all abilities to achieve highly and make good progress throughout their time at the school.

Inclusion

The subject's contribution to the inclusion of students is outstanding

- This is an inclusive school that takes exceptional care to ensure that all pupils are able to access the full range of ICT learning activities in the ICT scheme of work. Lower attaining pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make very good progress.
- ICT is very well used to engage and motivate disaffected learners and the benefits of this are particularly evident in the improved achievement of Year 8 pupils.

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

- continue to improve the pupil tracking and target setting systems to enable all staff to access this data from classrooms and to make it easier to identify under achieving pupils.

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,


Ralph Lilley
Additional Inspector