

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404045
F 020 7421 6855
www.ofsted.gov.uk



08 December 2006

Ms Knowles
Headteacher
West Denton Primary school
Hillhead Road
West Denton
Newcastle upon Tyne
Tyne and Wear
NE5 1DN

Dear Ms Knowles

Ofsted survey inspection programme – ICT

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 4 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 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 name of your school, but you 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 pupils, scrutiny of documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of lessons.

The overall effectiveness of ICT is judged to be satisfactory.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are satisfactory.

- Pupils achieve satisfactory standards across all aspects of the programme of study. They use a range of digital media and through links to outside agencies have opportunities to develop higher level skills such as those involved in movie making. Their ICT skills are sound but some of their deeper understanding of ICT concepts is missing.

- Pupils make good progress in the school from a low starting point though this is hampered by their difficulty in remembering, weak speaking skills and for some a lack of opportunity to develop ICT outside the immediate school context.
- Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Their behaviour and response to teaching is excellent and they enjoy their ICT lessons. Pupils work very well together yet they are independent learners. Relationships between them and between the teacher and the pupils is excellent.

Quality of teaching and learning of ICT

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

- The Foundation Stage lesson observed used a very good and successful investigative approach to a topic that is difficult to teach well. The teacher had prepared an outstanding set of resources to support the learning and teaching assistants gave very good support.
- In Key Stage 2 the lessons were well planned and organised. Pupils knew what was expected of them at each stage of the lesson as the objectives were made clear to them.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is good and enables them to teach skills successfully. However, often the whole lesson takes place in the computer room whereas pupils may benefit from plenaries being done in the classroom where access to an electronic whiteboard is easier. In addition, lessons do not often begin with interesting starter activities that would stimulate thinking.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory.

- There is good breadth in the curriculum and it fully meets statutory requirements, but the school has not had the confidence to move too far outside the QCA scheme of work.
- Thus there is no effective cross curriculum ICT framework that has planned opportunities for pupils to practise and embed their acquired ICT knowledge, skills and understanding. Pupils are, however, assessed regularly and accurately against the objectives in the QCA units of work and there is some good pupil self assessment here.

Leadership and management of ICT

The quality of leadership and management is good.

- The school has been designated as a centre of excellence for a national ICT leadership programme as a testimony to its good management and leadership.

- ICT is a well planned subject that is carefully documented with appropriate policies in place. Monitoring of standards and the quality of teaching and learning takes place systematically.
- Annual evaluation of outcomes clearly informs the next action plan, and teachers' subject knowledge is also audited annually, though it only tests skills and not knowledge and understanding of how to teach concepts.
- The subject leader is reflective about ICT, has a good understanding of future needs and developments, and continues to make good decisions about resourcing and curriculum planning.

The impact of ICT on whole-school improvement

The current focus on raising standards by the use of ICT is good, for example by financing SAT ICT based materials. The development of the virtual teaching and learning environment is a good move to open up access to ICT to outside school by pupils, parents and teachers. The focus on ICT to support target setting is also a good development.

Inclusion

ICT contributes satisfactorily to inclusion but the school is aware that it needs to plan more for the more able and gifted and talented pupils. Some good provision and support for those pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities was observed during the visit.

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

- plan opportunities for pupils to embed their knowledge, skills and understanding in ICT by its application across the curriculum
- audit teachers' understanding of how to teach ICT concepts and concentrate on developing pupils' ICT capability as well as their skills.

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 Ofsted's website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

John Williams
Her Majesty's Inspector