

16 January 2007

Mr G Longman  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Longman

Ofsted survey inspection programme – ICT

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 11-12 January 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 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 pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of lessons.

The overall effectiveness of ICT was judged to be satisfactory.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in ICT are satisfactory.

- By the end of Year 11, standards in ICT are above average and pupils' progress is satisfactory. The most able pupils are not always provided with challenging enough tasks and so their progress is more limited.
- By the end of Year 9, pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of data logging techniques because of the excellent work undertaken by the science and geography departments.

- The development of pupils' ICT capability across the curriculum is varied. In art and design, ICT is used very effectively to produce high quality digital images. In many other subjects, the development of pupils' ICT capability is inconsistent and depends very much on which teacher they have. Progress can vary considerable, even within departments.
- Pupils' personal development is good. They enjoy their ICT lessons and develop good independent learning skills. Most are able to make appropriate choices when choosing software applications for a specific audience.

### Quality of teaching and learning of ICT

The quality of teaching and learning in ICT is satisfactory.

- There are examples of outstanding teaching as seen in science. On these occasions, pupils are enthused by the innovative use of ICT to extend their studies and to improve standards in both science and ICT.
- The specialist ICT teaching observed was satisfactory. The new schemes of work are of a high quality and provide teachers with detailed plans and appropriate materials that extend and support pupils. However, not all teachers use these materials effectively and this limits pupils' progress.
- Occasionally, teaching is unsatisfactory. This occurs when lessons are dull and do not inspire pupils to do their best. As a consequence, pupils do not make sufficient progress in these lessons.
- Across the school, the use of ICT is inconsistent. There are pockets of excellent practice as seen in geography and art and design. However, too often it is dependent on the individual teacher's enthusiasm for ICT rather than a planned approach.
- Good use is made of the support provided by the ICT technical staff.

### Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory.

- All pupils follow a programme of study in ICT that meets statutory requirements.
- Good use is made of ICT in subjects such as science, physical education, design and technology and geography to improve standards in these subjects.
- Continuing improvements to the ICT infrastructure are ensuring that pupils have greater access to ICT facilities.
- Information and communication technology is used effectively by the learning support department to track and improve pupils' progress.

## Leadership and management of ICT

Leadership and management of ICT are good.

- The appointment of key staff to oversee the development of ICT has brought about considerable progress since the previous inspection when ICT provision was judged to be unsatisfactory.
- Statutory requirements are now met. There is now good technical support. Considerable funding has been spent on improving the ICT infrastructure. There is a clear vision for the development of ICT and strong support from senior staff. The department is well placed to move forward.
- There is now a greater emphasis on accurate assessment procedures and the standardisation of levels within the ICT department.
- There is only limited monitoring of pupils' ICT experiences and performance across the school. The school's leaders have also identified this as an area for improvement.

## Assessment of ICT

Assessment is good.

- There are now extensive assessment procedures. These enable pupils' progress to be monitored and intervention strategies are employed to improve pupils' progress.
- Pupils know their targets for improvement and know how to improve. Good quality marking and informative comments enhance pupils' ICT capability.
- The school is well prepared for the Key Stage 3 ICT on screen test.

## Inclusion

All pupils benefit from opportunities to use the school's computers outside of lesson times. This ensures that none are disadvantaged when completing homework or research. The learning support department uses ICT effectively to motivate and improve pupils' standards.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included to:

- improve, review and monitor pupils' ICT experiences across the curriculum
- raise the quality of teaching, particularly at Key Stage 4
- ensure the most able pupils make better progress with the development of their ICT capability.

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

David Cox  
Additional Inspector