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Dear Mrs Baker

Ofsted survey inspection programme – ICT

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 6 November 2008 to look at work in ICT. As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the subject, the visit had a particular focus on the quality of assessment.

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 discussions with staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of three part lessons.

The overall effectiveness of ICT was judged to be satisfactory.

Achievement and standards in ICT

Achievement in ICT is satisfactory and standards are broadly average.

- Attainment on entry is broadly average and pupils make satisfactory progress by the end of the Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- By the end of Year 6, pupils can produce slide shows, which include basic animation as well as sound, text and pictures. Pupils make choices about the use of colour, size and font of their text. They are particularly good at manipulating text as well as exchanging and sharing information.
- ICT is contributing to raising standards in the core subjects.
- There are missed opportunities to use ICT to help meet the needs of pupils who speak English as an additional language.

- There is good use of ICT to help increase pupils' awareness of other cultures and faiths as well as world affairs. Pupils enjoyed, for example, accessing different websites to view news stories and footage of the elections in America. One pupil stated 'I like using ICT because I can visit the whole world from my classroom in just one day'.
- Pupils adopt safe practices when using the internet and are aware of the importance of not sharing personal details.

Quality of teaching and learning of ICT

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

- Teaching and support staff benefit from high quality training and this has helped them to develop good subject knowledge. However, at times they do not always transfer the good teaching strategies they use in other subjects to ICT lessons for example, the use of talk partners, explicit teaching of key vocabulary and some assessment strategies. As a result, the needs of some pupils are not always well catered for.
- Teaching assistants provide effective support for vulnerable pupils and help them to become independent learners. A particularly good strategy is the use of questions that challenge pupils' thinking.
- Teachers make good use of the interactive whiteboards to demonstrate new learning at the beginning of lessons.
- Pupils' learning is enhanced when activities are interactive for example, when pupils were finding out about what life was like for slaves.
- Lessons typically include good opportunities for pupils to be creative and work collaboratively and there is adequate challenge for the more able pupils.
- Learning is put in a meaningful context and this helps pupils to see the value of what they are being taught and makes lessons interesting.
- The quality of daily planning for ICT is too variable. Where planning is best, it includes clear and precise intended learning outcomes. However, planning is, at times, too vague especially when two or more subjects are taught simultaneously.
- Pupils receive effective guidance and support about how to improve a unit of work; however, they do not all contribute sufficiently to the assessment of their own learning during the course of a lesson. This at times slows down the pace of learning.

Quality of the curriculum for ICT

The quality of the curriculum for ICT is satisfactory.

- ICT is well embedded across the curriculum and contributing to a more creative and exciting curriculum.
- ICT is facilitating the integration of subjects. Good examples include the numerous links between English, history and ICT, with pupils undertaking searches to produce slide shows for example about the Tudors.

- The application of ICT in other subjects is contributing significantly to pupils' enjoyment of learning.
- Staff make effective use of a locally produced scheme of work to ensure pupils improve their ICT skills and capability as they progress through the school.
- Provision for control technology has improved, but data logging is an area in need of improvement.

Leadership and management of ICT

The leadership and management of ICT are satisfactory.

- The coordinator provides good support to staff in helping them to become confident and competent users of ICT. Many are now prepared to take risks and explore new ideas.
- There has been a good self-review of the subject, which has enabled the school to gain an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses. A detailed action plan has been produced as a result.
- The ICT coordinator ensures that the principles of best value are adopted when purchasing new equipment. He has also helped to ensure that the school now has hardware and software that are more reliable and fit for purpose.
- The ICT co-ordinator has yet to undertake formal lessons observations and does not report to governors about the progress pupils make and the standards in each Key Stage.
- There is currently insufficient evaluation of the impact that ICT has on helping to raise standards in other subjects.
- The school has a clear vision for ICT which is shared and embraced by staff and governors; however, the vision does not highlight the potential for using ICT as a tool to support whole school improvement including raising standards overall.

Use of Assessment

The use of assessment in ICT is satisfactory.

- The school tracks and monitors pupils' progress. However, until recently, the data has not always been accurate or analysed as robustly as it is in the core subjects.
- The school sets targets for all pupils, but these are not reviewed frequently enough to help accelerate progress during the course of an academic year.
- Teachers make effective use of assessment information to inform their planning.
- Pupils are proud of their work; they welcome feedback form their teachers and think they achieve well. However, older pupils are not sufficiently aware of the level at which they are working in ICT.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- improving the quality of daily lesson plans for ICT, ensuring these take full account of the needs of all pupils
- developing the role of the ICT coordinator to help raise standards by accelerating improvements in the quality of teaching and ensuring that assessment and other generic teaching strategies are as well embedded in ICT lessons as they are in other subjects.
- ensuring there is good provision for data logging.

We also discussed the importance of the school continuing to explore ways of improving provision for ICT in the Foundation Stage.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop ICT in the school.

As explained in the 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