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Mr B Steane
Acting Headteacher
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Dear Mr Steane

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Information and communication technology (ICT)

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 21 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 interviews with yourself and your ICT technician, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of two lessons in a Year 2/3 class and a Year 5/6 class, with a focus on the pupils in Year 2 and Year 6, and discussions with Year 2/3 and Year 5/6 pupils.

The overall effectiveness of ICT was judged to be inadequate.

Achievement and standards in ICT

Standards in ICT are below national average by the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Achievement is inadequate.

- Pupils enter school with a wide variation in their ICT skills and capabilities. By the end of the Foundation Stage they have made satisfactory progress in using a computer keyboard and mouse. They are beginning to control floor robots.
- By the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 standards are below average overall. Achievement in both Key Stages is inadequate. Standards are broadly

in line with national expectations for presenting information and communication but below in all other aspects of ICT.

- Pupils enjoy using computers, interactive whiteboards and floor robots. They work well together and are proud of their work. By Year 6, pupils are prepared to experiment should things go wrong and are happy to help each other.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the need to keep safe when using the internet and of the dangers of revealing personal details when on line.
- ICT has a satisfactory impact on raising standards in other subjects, for example English, mathematics, science and history. However, opportunities to use ICT in other subjects is not always well planned for.

Quality of teaching and learning of ICT

The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate.

- Interactive whiteboards are used satisfactorily by teachers, especially to support literacy and numeracy. Satisfactory opportunities are also given for pupils to use the interactive whiteboards. This adds impact to lessons and to pupils' interest and motivation.
- Pupils are well managed and consequently work well together and enjoy using ICT.
- The part-time technician gives good support for group and individual activities, especially in the ICT suite.
- However, teachers' subject knowledge, and confidence, varies throughout the school, and especially when teaching aspects other than information and communication.
- No reference is made in lessons to the learning objectives and the success criteria for ICT, so that pupils are unclear about what is being learnt and why, and cannot self assess against the objectives.

Quality of the curriculum for ICT

The quality of the ICT curriculum is inadequate.

- Pupils are not receiving their statutory entitlement to the National Curriculum.
- Although the programme of study is planned through the use of a published scheme, there is an emphasis, especially when linked to other subjects, on presenting information and communication. This is at the expense of other aspects of knowledge and skills in ICT.
- In the lessons observed, the learning objectives for the ICT elements were not shared with the pupils, so they only had a limited understanding of what ICT skills and knowledge were being learnt.
- Both Year 2 and Year 6 pupils were observed using the same program. Although the program consolidated their understanding of the mathematical concepts of halves and doubles, neither lesson supported the systematic development of ICT skills.

- There are not enough resources for pupils to fully access the ICT curriculum. However, you recognise that there is a need to improve resources, which will be one of the priorities for the newly appointed ICT co-ordinator.
- Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and gifted and talented pupils is not systematically planned for to match their individual needs.
- There is no extra provision for pupils who have limited access to a computer at home.

Leadership and management of ICT

Leadership and management of ICT are inadequate.

- The school is staffed by yourself, as acting headteacher, and two recently qualified teachers. Consequently, as well as your full-time teaching commitment and your leadership responsibilities as acting headteacher, you are leading and managing the majority of curriculum subjects, including ICT. Therefore, ICT has not been a priority for you or the school.
- You and your governors recognise that not having a substantive ICT co-ordinator has resulted in a lack of focus for the subject and so a new ICT co-ordinator has been appointed for January 2009.
- Your ICT technician is employed part-time to ensure that hardware faults are rectified and new programs are loaded onto computers and the network. She also provides good support for group activities, especially in the ICT suite. However, she has not received any recent training, in order to update her own knowledge and skills.
- Parents and pupils are well informed of the school's policy for internet use. As a result, pupils have a good understanding of the appropriate and safe use of the internet.
- However, the development plan for ICT does not show appropriate rigour, in order to raise standards and achievement. For example, the plan is not costed and the success criteria are not written in a way that can be measured.
- There is no formal monitoring of teaching and learning in order to evaluate the impact of the teaching of ICT on achievement and standards.
- There has been no recent staff training, to ensure all staff are confident in their ability to teach the ICT curriculum and to confidently use ICT across all areas of the national curriculum.
- There is no policy for staff use of laptops and computers, and for appropriate use of school laptops and memory sticks when taken off the school premises and used at home.
- The link-governor for ICT has recently left the governing body, and so there is no governor acting as a "critical friend" for the subject.

Use of Assessment

The use of assessment is inadequate.

- Pupils' ICT work is assessed against coverage of the curriculum and the skills they demonstrate.
- ICT assessment does not relate National Curriculum levels.
- The lack of systematic assessment against National Curriculum levels means that work is not sufficiently matched to pupils' capabilities.
- Pupils do not know what levels they are achieving, or aspiring to, in ICT.
- The lack of an audit of pupils' access to, and use of, computers at home, means that teachers do not know the range of skills pupils bring from home.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- ensuring pupils receive their statutory entitlement to ICT
- improving the quality of teaching and learning to ensure that pupils make better progress and reach higher standards
- developing rigorous assessment procedures, so that teachers can plan well-matched activities for different groups of pupils and can inform pupils of their target levels and how they can achieve them
- ensuring that resources are available for pupils to develop their ICT skills and to ensure coverage of the ICT curriculum.

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

Anthony Green
Additional Inspector