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Mr M Williamson  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Williamson

Ofsted survey inspection programme – E-safety

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 25 June 2009 to look at e-safety.

As outlined in my initial letter, this visit looked at:

- the extent to which schools teach learners to adopt safe and responsible practices in using new technologies
- e-safety training for staff.

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 students, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of students' work, observation of one lesson and a tour of the school.

The overall effectiveness of e-safety was judged to be satisfactory with several good features.

Outcomes for learners

Outcomes for learners are satisfactory.

- Students know and understand reasonably well what they need to do to keep safe using new technologies. This is because the curriculum ensures all students use computers quite extensively, under clear guidance and careful supervision. This includes students who take part in after school activities or who board.

- With some exceptions, students cooperate with expectations for e-safety in school, and feel safe there. However, several fail to put into practice what they have learned when out of school.

## Quality of provision

The curriculum is satisfactory.

- The curriculum has strong features, although because some of these are recent the impact to date is satisfactory.
- All students and their parents or carers sign the school's acceptable use policy. Students become familiar with the school's expectations because they are consistently applied by staff. Simple reminder notices in several rooms summarise what everybody is expected to do. Year 8 students recently made a slideshow for the whole school, which gives practical advice on how to deal with e-safety problems like cyberbullying and keeping personal details secure.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) lessons in both key stages teach all students how to use the internet and electronic communications safely. The students' understanding is deepened through the personal and social education programme. However, much is new. Planning for evaluation and progression is at an early stage.
- Teaching in several subjects gives students practical experience of using computers for research, although the filtering system sometimes makes this complicated. In history lessons, for instance, students have been introduced to the breadth of resources available from the internet, because teachers download relevant material. One teacher encourages her students to explore the internet to practise their reading skills and uses opportunities to discuss the need to interpret and evaluate information.

## Leadership and management

The leadership and management of e-safety are good.

- You have ensured that expectations about the use of new technologies are clear to all, and that students are supported so they are safe in school. Taking careful note of feedback from police, parents and staff, you are working with staff to adapt provision to better meet the needs of your especially vulnerable students.
- As a result of good training, staff have acted effectively to keep students safe and are well placed to develop safer independent use of new technology. However, much is at an early stage of development.
- The ICT teacher makes good use of links with other schools, the police, the local authority and national agencies such as BECTA and the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) to keep up to date with risks and good practice. His development plan for the subject places emphasis on e-safety.
- The acceptable use policy states clearly what all in school can and cannot do with new technology and is signed by all stakeholders. It is tailored to the needs of the vulnerable students and adapted to take

account of incidents. It is reviewed by key staff, but students and parents have not contributed.

- Incidents are classified by seriousness and dealt with quickly and effectively. Parents are advised, and when the risks are more serious, the police have been involved.
- Through the home-school liaison coordinator, the school provides helpful practical support to parents. Each parent and new student has the school's e-safety policy explained to them through a home visit before they join the school. The school displays practical advice which encourages positive use of new technology, and has helped worried parents to monitor and guide their children's use.
- Despite this, the school realises that home computers are often not secured and students do not apply all they have learned about e-safety out of school. The school's new website does not yet provide advice or links to sources of up-to-date information.

### Quality of training

The quality of training about e-safety is good.

- Expectations are understood well by all staff because all have been trained. In the past two years, the school has worked closely with their linked police officer to provide training based on CEOP 'Think you know' guidance. Further briefings from the ICT teacher and yourself have kept knowledge up to date.
- Parents too have been provided with 'Think you know' leaflets.
- All staff spoken to, including new teachers and teaching assistants, lunch time and boarding staff are well aware of risks and what to do about them. However, governors have not had training on e-safety, and the school realises that training needs to be regularly updated to stay ahead of risks.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- reducing the number of incidents of unsafe use of new technology, by, for example, further extending the advice and support given to parents
- spreading the good practice in some classes which enables students to learn how to use new technology independently and safely.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop e-safety 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

Susan Bowles  
Her Majesty's Inspector