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Mr H Stride
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Dear Mr Stride

Ofsted survey inspection programme – E-safety

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your students and staff, during my visit on 10 July 2009 to look at work in 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 and case studies.

The overall effectiveness of e-safety was judged to be good.

Outcomes for learners

Outcomes for students are good.

- All students report that they feel safe and well protected when using new technologies. Students of all ages display responsible attitudes, the confidence to stay safe and successfully manage personal risk. This is because of the excellent personal, social and health programmes which have a strong emphasis on personal safety, developing positive attitudes to learning and behaviour and fostering independence. The programmes are reinforced by high quality school

technical support service team who provide a specialist advice and guidance to students through their e-mailed questions and queries.

- You have taken the opportunity to positively promote e-safety through an unambiguous, comprehensive acceptable user policy and practice. Parents are provided with the opportunity to adopt e-safety guidance using the school website. This helps support good habits when new technology is used in the home.
- The acceptable user policy sets out explicit expectations and boundaries for responsible use. In practice the monitoring of new technology use is rigorous. Consequences of inappropriate action are made clear and are well understood by students and staff.
- The small numbers of incidents have been well managed and pragmatic action taken by senior leaders and the systems manager. Parents are kept fully informed and external agencies have been involved when appropriate.

Quality of provision

The quality of provision is satisfactory.

- The high quality personal, social and health education programmes enable students to develop their personal safety skills and stay safe. E-safety is a component in information and communication technology (ICT) lessons in Year 7 and personal programmes in Year 8. By the end of Year 9 all students complete an accredited ICT award. The approaches to vulnerable students are successfully personalised. However, the e-safety curriculum is not age related and does not provide planned progression. This results in the missing of some opportunities to systematically broaden understanding of more complex issues which students may face.
- Assemblies are used to provide students with useful and appropriate feedback following incidents but the content is sometimes general in view of the vertical groupings.
- Although the broadband take up in the community is much higher than average, the school provides good access to new technologies before, during and after school to ensure all have equal access.
- Staff and students judge mentor sessions to be effective but there are no organized checks in place to make certain there is consistency of coverage across all students groups, for example those arriving at other than the normal time of the year.

Leadership and management

The leadership and management of e-safety are good.

- You provide a clear vision and insightful planning based on thoughtful and thorough evaluation by all managers. As a consequence, expectations of what students can achieve and how responsible they can be have been raised appreciably. It has also led to the fostering of a talented technical support team who have a positive impact on e-safety practice.

- The robust acceptable user policy is updated regularly and involves all major stakeholders. It is reviewed annually by the governing body.
- Students are fully aware of the policy and practice. Consequently they demonstrate a good understanding of how to manage their own personal safety and avoid risk.
- You are fully aware of some of the curriculum areas that need further development to ensure that all students progressively develop their understanding of complex e-safety issues.

Quality of training

The quality of training is satisfactory.

- School staff take full advantage of an effective technical support team to develop their e-safety understanding and skills. This is supplemented by specialist local authority subject input when appropriate.
- Although all staff responsible for student learning have benefitted from e-safety training and the availability of onsite technical skill, the planning of training is not methodically undertaken to build and develop expertise.
- E-safety guidance and support is provided for parents on the school website but it is not given a particularly high profile to ensure the quality of collaborative working with parents and families is progressively strengthened.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- developing an age related and progressive e-safety curriculum to ensure consistent approaches to more complex issues
- enhancing the links with parents and other stakeholders to improve their understanding and contribution towards e-safety
- ensuring that e-safety permeates all staff training to ensure that the curriculum is appropriate and pastoral practices reliable so that the quality of staff monitoring is strengthened both in and outside the classroom.

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

Clive Petts
Additional Inspector