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Dear Dr Taylor

Ofsted survey inspection programme – ICT

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 19-20 October 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 good.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in ICT are good.

- Pupils join the school with very low standards in ICT. By the end of Year 11, standards in ICT are below average. Pupils' progress is good and by the end of Year 11, most pupils are confident users of ICT. At Key Stage 4, more able pupils make outstanding progress, with all gaining at least a grade C at GCSE in recent years. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress because of the effective support provided.

- Middle attaining pupils do not make the same progress as other pupils because their needs are not always recognised.
- The development of pupils' ICT capability across the curriculum is good. Pupils have a good knowledge of computer aided design. Their understanding of how ICT impacts on society is relatively weak, especially how commerce and industry use ICT.
- Pupils' attitudes are good and they mostly work hard. They are courteous and very inquisitive. However, occasionally they display unsatisfactory attitudes, which disrupt their learning.

### Quality of teaching and learning of ICT

The quality of teaching and learning in ICT is good.

- Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject, particularly the requirements of the wide range of examination courses available to pupils. This helps pupils to gain good marks in their coursework.
- Good use is made of the support provided by the ICT technical staff.
- Tasks are well matched to the needs of most pupils although better use of assessment information is needed to set more demanding tasks for middle attaining pupils. Learning assistants are used effectively to support and manage pupils and this aids pupils' learning.
- Occasionally however, there is too much emphasis on what the teacher is doing rather than what the pupils are learning. This does not allow pupils to be creative or independent.

### Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- Pupils enjoy many elements of the curriculum, particularly producing presentations in subjects such as geography and history. Good use is made of ICT in science and mathematics. This also helps to improve pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. There are few opportunities for pupils to be creative and use multimedia techniques effectively.
- The curriculum meets statutory requirements. Pupils have many opportunities to use ICT but their experiences are not audited effectively.
- Pupils enjoy using the ICT facilities, particularly before and after school. The school is currently restructuring its web site and pupils have limited access to work and support materials from home.
- Teachers from across the school integrate ICT into their lessons to enable pupils to apply their ICT capability in new contexts as well as supporting pupils' progress with ICT.

## Leadership and management of ICT

Leadership of ICT is good.

- The subject leader of ICT, along with the acting headteacher, provides good leadership and has helped the school to make considerable progress with ICT developments in recent years. There is a clear vision for bringing about improvement. New facilities such as the e-lab are enhancing pupils' ICT experiences. The school provides good quality in house professional development for staff in the use of ICT.

Management of ICT is satisfactory.

- Whilst the school has a reasonably accurate picture of standards and the progress of pupils within discrete ICT provision, there is limited monitoring of the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' achievement.

## Assessment of ICT

Assessment is satisfactory.

- The regular assessments enable teachers to provide encouragement for pupils. However, current systems, including marking, do not always inform pupils about how to improve their work. This limits the progress of some middle attaining pupils.

## 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. More able pupils and those with learning difficulties make the best progress because of the good support they receive.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included to:

- provide more challenge for middle attaining pupils
- monitor the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' ICT experiences, especially across the curriculum
- improve the rigour of assessment systems
- continue to develop the school's web site so that pupils' have greater access to materials to support their school work.

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