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Mr M J Myers
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Myers

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 17 June 2009 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 staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work, a tour of the school by pupils and observation of three part lessons, an every child counts session and a discussion with the editorial team of your school newspaper.

The overall effectiveness of ICT was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards in ICT

Achievement is good. Standards by the end of Year 6 are broadly in line with national expectations.

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with ICT skills which are below average. During the Early Years Foundation Stage the children are given the opportunity to use ICT in a variety of ways to support their learning. They use interactive white boards, plasma screens, CD players, microwaves, computers and control technology.

By the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage the children have made good progress and they can use new technology with confidence.

- In Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils continue to make good progress. By the end of Year 6 they have reached standards in ICT which are broadly in line with national expectations.
- When the pupils are using ICT they are respectful of the equipment, the members of staff and each other. They work well together and are able to support each others' learning.
- Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are provided for well. They have good support in lessons and this enables them to make the same good progress as their peers.
- All pupils spoken to were aware of what they need to do to keep safe when they are using new technologies. They know and understand the rules and procedures in school which they follow.
- Higher attaining pupils in Year 5 are given the opportunity to produce the school newspaper using ICT. This project has motivated the pupils and they have learnt much about project management, dealing with people and financial matters.

Quality of teaching and learning of ICT

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

- The lessons seen were meticulously planned. Members of staff provided activities which enabled those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to make good progress.
- In most lessons teachers had good subject knowledge and were able to use this to good effect. This included using key ICT vocabulary with the pupils and ensuring that the pupils used the vocabulary correctly to.
- In all lessons there were good working relationships between the teachers, teaching assistants and the pupils. This meant that the pupils were confident in their use of ICT.
- However in some lessons the subject knowledge was less good. This meant that the higher attaining pupils were insufficiently challenged and did not make as much progress as the other pupils in the class.
- In the 'every child counts' session ICT was used to good effect, to support the pupils' learning of mathematics. ICT motivated the pupil and also enabled the pupil to reflect on previous learning.

Quality of the curriculum for ICT

The curriculum is satisfactory.

- The curriculum provided does cover all aspects of the National Curriculum for ICT. However some of the aspects, such as control technology and data logging have only recently been introduced. This is because a lack of equipment in the past hindered your ability to introduce these aspects in a comprehensive way. This means that the

pupils have had a greater exposure to the communication and presenting information aspect of ICT.

- You are working with outside agencies such as Aim Higher and Carlisle United to ensure that the curriculum now in place will be embedded.

Leadership and management of ICT

Leadership and management are good.

- You have a clear vision for ICT in the school. This vision is being brought to fruition through your school development plan and ICT action plan. These documents focus on how ICT will improve outcomes for the pupils.
- You have recently audited the ICT skills of all members of staff. You are in the process of providing bespoke ICT training for staff. This is to ensure that they have the confidence and ability to teach all aspects of the curriculum and are able to challenge effectively the higher attainers. You have linked the training needs of the staff to their performance management.
- You apply the four principles of best value consistently. You and your ICT co-ordinator have ensured that the recently purchased equipment is the most appropriate for the pupils. You have also obtained much equipment for free.
- The use of ICT is embedded across the school. All staff seen used the interactive whiteboards with confidence. This confident use of ICT is impacting on outcomes for pupils.
- The pupils, staff and parents have signed acceptable user policies for new technologies, and these plus the simple but effective procedures in place in the school keep the pupils safe.

Use of Assessment

Assessment is satisfactory.

- A new assessment system has recently been introduced. It is in an embryonic state and is not fully established across the school.
- Teachers assess the pupils' work and level it according to a set of criteria. In Years 5 and 6 the pupils are able to engage with the assessment of their work as they self assess it.
- The assessment system means that you are aware of what each pupil in the school is able to do when using ICT. However the assessment sheets are generic and do not allow for individual targets to be set.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- developing the subject knowledge of all members of staff to ensure that they are able to challenge the higher attaining pupils in ICT
- embedding the curriculum to ensure that it is equally focused on all aspects of ICT
- establishing the ICT assessment across the school.

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

Tanya Harber Stuart
Her Majesty's Inspector