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Mrs A Blake
Headteacher
Blessed Robert Widmerpool Catholic Primary and Nursery School
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Dear Mrs Blake

Ofsted 2009-10 subject survey inspection programme: information and communication technology (ICT)

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 23 November 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 use of ICT to improve learning in other subjects.

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.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included interviews with staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work, observation of three part lessons and a tour of the school.

The overall effectiveness of ICT is good.

Achievement in ICT

Achievement in ICT is good.

- The majority of pupils join the school in the Early Years Foundation Stage at the age of three and most stay in the school until the end of Year 6. The Early Years Foundation Stage profile is used to assess pupils' capabilities in ICT during their first six weeks in the school. Pupils' experience of, and capabilities in, using ICT at this stage vary widely but, overall, attainment on entry is below average.
- Pupils make good progress during Key Stages 1 and 2. Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6 is broadly average in data-handling and modelling. Pupils' standards in the use of ICT to communicate their ideas and present

their work are above average. This represents outstanding progress in this aspect of the National Curriculum. Overall, achievement in ICT is good.

- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe when using the internet.
- Behaviour is excellent and pupils have outstanding attitudes to learning. Older pupils are able to work independently very well.

Quality of teaching of ICT

The quality of teaching of ICT is good.

- Teachers have good subject knowledge. Assessment information is used very well to plan activities of varying challenge appropriate to the different starting points of pupils. Older pupils are able to explain what their targets are and what they need to do to improve their work.
- Pupils make good use of a wide range of software resources and other peripherals like digital microscopes and cameras. However, the majority of ICT resources are located in a computer suite which means they are not always available to pupils in their classrooms when they need them.
- Pupils' work is rigorously assessed by National Curriculum levels and the progress made by individuals tracked against their challenging targets. The tracking system identifies which pupils are on target, which are exceeding their targets and which are falling behind. Extra support is provided to help those falling behind to catch up. The quality and use of assessment are outstanding.

Quality of the curriculum in ICT

The curriculum is good.

- Pupils receive their statutory National Curriculum entitlement for ICT at all key stages. There are clear progression routes for pupils to develop their skills in different aspects of ICT. For instance, pupils first learn about programming when they instruct floor robots to carry out pre-determined movements during a topic in Key Stage 1. Later, in Year 4, they have the opportunity to develop their programming skills further when they use the Logo language to control an on-screen sprite in tracing out their own initials. In Year 5, pupils programme controllable model vehicles and, in Year 6, they have the chance to program the dance movements of their machines in an innovative 'Strictly Come Robots' competition.
- Good use is made of the computer-aided design and manufacturing facilities provided by a nearby City Learning Centre. Pupils use a range of software to design objects on screen which later can be manufactured by a computer-controlled laser cutting machine.
- However, generally pupils have more opportunities to use ICT for communicating their ideas and presenting their work than they do for the other aspects of the National Curriculum. Consequently standards in this aspect are higher than they are for other aspects such as data-handling.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in ICT

The effectiveness of leadership and management is good with outstanding features.

- Senior leaders have an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The management of resources is good and the principles of 'best value' are applied well in procuring new resources. The strategic plan is carefully linked to a three-year replacement cycle for upgrading the computers.
- Staff training needs are audited annually and this process results in individual training plans which are monitored each term.
- The capacity to improve is outstanding.

Subject issue: the use of ICT to improve learning in other subjects

The use of ICT to improve learning in other subjects is good.

- The ICT curriculum is carefully mapped and woven into the topics pupils study. This ensures new ICT skills are taught within a meaningful context and that assessments are based on pupils' application of them. Teachers have an excellent awareness of how well pupils can apply the skills they have taught them in other contexts. Older pupils have excellent opportunities to decide for themselves how and when they will use ICT to improve their learning.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- raising attainment in data-handling by providing more opportunities for older pupils to manipulate and analyse large data sets
- finding ways of making more ICT resources available in classrooms.

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

David Anstead
Her Majesty's Inspector