

Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404040  
F 020 7421 6855  
[enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



19 November 2007

Mr G Jones  
Headteacher  
St. Ambrose Barlow Catholic Primary School  
Shirley Road  
Birmingham  
West Midlands  
B28 9JJ

Dear Mr Jones

Ofsted survey inspection programme of primary schools 2007/8  
Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

Thank you for the hospitality and co-operation of your staff during my visit on 15 November 2007 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 impact of ICT on whole-school improvement.

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 your deputy headteacher, your subject co-ordinator, Year 2 and Year 6 pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of a Year 1 and a Year 4/5 lessons in the computer suite.

The overall effectiveness of ICT was judged to be good.

#### Achievement and standards

Standards in ICT are good and are rising. Achievement is good. The contribution to pupils' personal development and well-being is outstanding.

- By Year 6, standards are above expectations and the achievement of pupils is good. This represents good improvement since the Section 5 inspection of 2005, when standards and achievement in ICT were judged to be satisfactory and an issue for further improvement.
- Standards in ICT are rising throughout the school because of the impact of improvements in teaching, learning and resources.
- ICT has a good impact on raising standards in other subjects. Very good examples were observed of ICT raising standards in English. ICT

is also used well to support mathematics, science, art, history, French, music and religious education.

- Pupils enjoy using computers, interactive whiteboards and digital cameras. They are not afraid to experiment should things go wrong and they support each other extremely well to overcome problems. From a very early age, pupils are aware that to make mistakes when using ICT is a learning opportunity that should be viewed as a positive experience.

## Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

- Teaching of ICT is good, and at times outstanding, and has improved since the 2005 inspection. Teachers' subject knowledge is good.
- Learning objectives of lessons are shared with pupils, so that they understand the purpose of the lesson and can review their success at the end.
- Teaching assistants support pupils well and ensure work is matched to individual needs.
- Pupils are very well managed and consequently work very well together, in a calm and purposeful atmosphere. They co-operate and share ideas with enthusiasm. However, when pupils work in groups of three in the suite, not everyone in the group has the opportunity for hands-on use of the keyboard and mouse.
- Good use is made of interactive whiteboards to add impact and interest to lessons.
- Good use is made of visualisers to give instant feedback on pupils' work.
- Assessment is good. Teachers track pupils' progress against the learning objectives and use their assessments to support future planning. Pupils are encouraged to self-evaluate against the objectives of the lesson. However, not all pupils are aware of their individual ICT targets for their next stage of learning.

## Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the ICT curriculum is good.

- The programmes of study are being taught well and there are good links between other subjects. The link between ICT and literacy is very good. However, the school recognises the need to continue to adapt and monitor planning to support the Primary Strategy for literacy and numeracy.
- Provision for pupils with learning difficulties is good and they make good progress in ICT.
- The subject is well resourced. Resources have improved since the Section 5 inspection of 2005. However, there is a limited supply of digital cameras and video equipment to further support the creative element of the ICT curriculum.
- High quality displays in the school celebrate pupils' achievement in ICT through a wide range of subjects.

## Leadership and management of ICT

Leadership and management of ICT are good.

- The ICT co-ordinator has made a significant impact on the development of the subject since the inspection of 2005. Regular staff meetings contain an ICT element for trialling and/or evaluating hardware and software.
- Performance management is being used well to set ICT targets for teachers and support staff, in order to improve their skills and knowledge and to maintain the high profile of ICT.
- A part time technician gives good support for the subject on a weekly basis.
- Governors are well informed and support the subject very well.
- The policy for safe use of the internet is known by parents, carers and pupils.

Subject issue - the impact of ICT on whole-school improvement

The impact of ICT on whole school improvement is good.

- Audits of teachers' ICT skills and knowledge, through performance management, is used to identify individual training needs. This has had a good impact on teaching and learning and standards achieved.
- Opportunities for teachers and teaching assistants to develop their ICT skills through school and local authority training are given a high priority.
- The use of ICT to raise standards in other subjects is good. A particular strength is the impact on English and boys' writing.
- The school improvement plan, and subject co-ordinators' action plans, contain good reference to ICT.

## Inclusion

- Planning for different groups of pupils is good.
- Very good use is made of ICT to support pupils with learning difficulties and so they make good progress in a range of subjects.
- Provision for gifted and talented pupils is good and is given further support from the local technology school.
- Pupils support each other very well in lessons, especially when they are in difficulties.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included to:

- continue to monitor and evaluate the impact of ICT across the curriculum and, especially, to support the Primary Strategy for literacy and numeracy
- ensure pupils know their individual targets for improving their ICT skills and knowledge

- ensure that when pupils are in large groups, they share the keyboard and mouse so as to be able to consolidate and develop their skills.

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

Anthony Green  
Additional Inspector