

ICT Mark assessment report

Name of school:	Crosshall Infant School Academy Trust
Postcode:	PE19 7GG
School urn:	110891
Preferred name of school for certificate if different to above: (check with school)	
Name of head teacher:	Deborah James
Name of assessor:	Steve Cutting
Name of moderator (if applicable)	Pat Williams
Date of assessment:	18 th October 2010
Focus Elements:	Leadership and Management, Planning, Learning
Outline agenda of visit:	<p>12.45 Arrive at school.</p> <p>13.00 Introduction to the context of the school and discussion with Head Teacher, Mrs Debbie James, ICT lead - Mrs Elayne Kenway, and Mr. Keith Martin, ICT Governor and Vice Chair.</p> <p>13.30 Tour of school with senior leadership team, Head teacher, ICT Lead, ICT Governor, and ICT Assistant, Mrs Ann Coffey Discussion with children and review of ICT work.</p> <p>14.30 Review of evidence supporting the commentary – examples of medium-term planning, demonstrating ICT across the curriculum</p> <p>15.00 Discussion with parents.</p> <p>15.10 Discussion with classroom teachers and TAs</p> <p>15.30 Discussion with selected subject leaders – Literacy and Numeracy</p> <p>15.50 Consideration of recommendation for award</p> <p>16.00 Feedback to senior leadership team.</p>

Commentary on assessment:

1) Vision, leadership and organisational management

Crosshall Infant School is an outstanding school, as evidenced by their most recent Ofsted inspection reports, and the ICT witnessed during this visit was no different. The school is led in its vision by the headteacher, but this is not done in isolation. The VC of Governors works for IBM on the project management side, and this contributes to the clear sense of direction shown in the school. The organisation of ICT by the ICT Lead is exemplary, both in documentation, which is comprehensive, and in the support provided to other staff. She is supported in this by a highly competent ICT Assistant, who ensures that the technology works when it is needed.

There is an ethos in the school that is apparent from all staff that ICT is fundamental to their work with children. We were privileged to see some exemplary practice with ICT as we toured the school – the use of BeeBots and the IWB in the nursery, children filming the use of musical instruments in year 1, the use of the IWB in PE, and so on.

Shared planning and best practice across year groups and through the open classroom arrangement ensures developments are shared and innovation is possible in a non-threatening and progressive way, rather than technology being thrown at staff for its own sake.

As an infant school, children do not access the internet unsupervised. Their level of competence with ICT is high, which would imply a higher level of risk once they are not in school. The school addresses this with communication and advice to parents. The school website is a well-used channel of communication, as is parent email.

The recent move to Academy status provides both opportunities and challenges. The freedom to define and teach to their own curriculum I am sure will be seized, and the school is already ensuring that its new status does not isolate it within Cambridgeshire.

2) Provision of ICT; quality and range

There is a great deal of informal transfer of information about children's ICT capability between teachers, and this is supported by moderation of children's work, their e-portfolios, and examples of work produced. On observation, the children were working on ICT tasks that were well above the age level expected. For example, children in year 2 combining text and graphics and writing for an audience. The extent of the use of ICT, in all areas of the curriculum, and with a wide range of technologies was excellent – with pupils totally engaged and on task. Children with special needs were observed, with one girl with a visual impairment using Braille devices, and supported by all staff who had learned it! A Computer Club is well used, and Activity Hour work enables children to make decisions about what technology to use, including support for gifted and talented.

Great use is made of wireless laptops, and all staff had their own. Laptops at the end of their use in school are passed on, and others sent to a school in Moldova. Even the catering staff had a laptop, and use IT to support healthy eating options.

The school makes great use of video technology as identified earlier, and the school website includes a video tour of the school made by the children. When I asked about the use of video, y2 children told about their activities, starting in reception!

There are a couple of areas where developments could be made, in the use of visualisers, and in expanding wireless network access out of doors. This is largely because of the already great use being

made of the IWBs, and the level of use of the school environment. There could also be opportunities to use handheld devices such as iPod Touches or PDAs – the children and staff would take to them easily.

The investment in the ICT Assistant has paid dividends in enabling teachers to teach with technology, without fear of failure. This contributes, alongside the whole attitude of the teaching staff, to an environment where ICT supports all areas of the curriculum.

3) Demonstrating impact on learning and teaching

As identified earlier, there is a “can do” culture in this school; no-one works in isolation, and no-one is left behind with ICT. There is a high level of support from the ICT Lead and the ICT Assistant, who identify the training needs of staff in line with the technology being used. Staff visit the Education Show, and the ICT Lead and Assistant visit BETT to bring back ideas to feed into the programme. However, this is done co-operatively so nothing is forced, and all is led by the educational needs of the children.

Thematic teaching is well supported by ICT, with children, for example, working on “Children across the World”, with art work, Geography (through Barnaby Bear), and other work utilising ICT.

The quality of work being done has already been identified, and the portfolios of children’s work shows high levels of ICT capability. Children we spoke to were enthusiastic and knowledgeable about their use of technology. Parents were very pleased with the role the school took in developing their children’s ICT, and saw the school as a leader in this area – as in others.

In conclusion, I would like to say what a pleasure it was to visit the school, and observe the level and quality of ICT activity – more than in most schools that I have visited (and that includes secondary schools!)

Areas of strength/outstanding practice within the context of the self-review framework:

- Attitude and competence of staff – all were ready and willing to use ICT, and did so with confidence.
- Quality of leadership at all levels. Initial indications from the SRF were that the school was competent, but it is much more than that. The Senior Leadership Team had created a wonderfully inclusive ethos that empowered all stakeholders, generating confidence and enthusiasm - a perfect model for the children.
- School based technical support is very effective and enhances provision.
- The use of technology above and beyond what the National Curriculum would indicate. Children and staff are not held back by age-related objectives, but move forward according to their abilities.
- All technology is driven by learning objectives – the right way round to do it.

The future: Possible areas for development and further progression within the context of the self-review framework. These should not be considered as weaknesses, but constitute an important contribution to planning for the future.

- The Rose Review offered this school opportunities to develop cross-curricular teaching in exciting and innovative ways. I think the school could, as an Academy, develop some of these opportunities and create an innovative curriculum of its own, with ICT supporting it.
- The school should consider some of the new technologies that can support learning, some in simple ways, such as visualisers, and some in exciting innovative ways, such as with handheld devices.
- The school could look to extend its wireless network to its grounds, to enable technology to support the learning already taking place there.

Assessor recommendation:

Threshold reached

