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Mrs M Dollard
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Dollard

Ofsted 2010–11 subject survey inspection programme: modern languages

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and pupils, during my visit on 30 March 2011 to look at work in modern languages.

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 without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included: interviews with staff and pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of two lessons.

Achievement in languages

- All pupils have good recall and can hold simple conversations on a range of topics. They listen carefully to models of the language and have very good pronunciation. Their listening skills are developing well, particularly when they are carefully trained by their teacher. Writing is the weakest skill and the school has, as a target for improvement, improving the accuracy of pupils' written work. Some higher attaining pupils can, however, already write short paragraphs by the end of Key Stage 2.
- Pupils are developing grammatical knowledge appropriate to their stage of language learning. They are comfortable in using grammatical terms, such as masculine and feminine, and know what they mean.
- Language-learning skills are developing particularly well and are being stressed well by teachers. Pupils are quick to see differences and

similarities between French and their own language and understand some sound-spelling links.

- Pupils reflect very well on how they are learning and what helps them to learn. They relish the fact that French is fun and say that the active way they practise in lessons helps them remember.
- Their intercultural understanding is strong. They talk with authority about life in France and have a satisfactory understanding of other countries in the world where French is spoken. They also demonstrate a broader understanding related to the visual arts in France.
- There is no difference in the progress made by different groups.

Quality of teaching in languages

- Teachers show enthusiasm and commitment to a subject which is well embedded in the curriculum. Their subject knowledge is good and they make very good use of additional authentic resources to ensure that pupils hear good models of French. The target language is generally used well, but teachers occasionally use English unnecessarily without checking if pupils have understood the French.
- Lessons are planned carefully to include a range of activities supported by varied resources. Teachers show a good awareness of pupils' needs in their plans and target questions well in lessons.
- A good emphasis on language-learning skills ensures that pupils have a good basis for the future, irrespective of the modern language they might learn.
- Assessment is developing well, although the subject leader is aware that this is an area that she can improve. Work has already started on the creation of a manageable system for recording pupils' achievement. Good use has been made of 'I can do' sheets to support pupils' self-assessment.

Quality of the curriculum in languages

- The local authority scheme of work offers a broad and balanced curriculum and this has been refined to meet the needs of the mixed-age classes. Curriculum plans display a secure understanding of the age-specific framework objectives and so plan for progression over the key stage. As pupils move through the key stage they meet, and use, an increasingly complex range of structures. The current plans for the oldest pupils, however, are too focused on reinforcement and revision.
- The links between modern languages and the other subjects are made very explicit in the school's documentation. Some good cross-curricular work is being done in the French 'follow-up' time, for example in the Year 5/6 'Destination France' project.
- Displays linked to modern languages are prominent around the school and celebrate what is being done in French and in the cross-curricular projects.

- Extra-curricular provision is a real strength. The most significant impact on learning has been achieved by the exchange, which is now firmly established, with a school in France. This link makes French learning real and motivates pupils well. Those that have been to France talk enthusiastically about their experiences and those who are to go are equally excited.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in languages

- Your school improvement plan and other school documentation show that you have maintained modern languages as a priority for your school. The rationale for language learning is clear and appropriate and your support has ensured that French has a high profile in the school.
- Your knowledge of the quality of the provision is very good. The self-evaluation document shows a high-quality analysis of the strengths and areas for development for the subject.
- Good use has been made of continuing professional development and the audit of staff competence and confidence will help you to target training in the future.
- The subject leader plays a key role in the curriculum development of the subject. Although you have monitored teaching in French well, the subject leader is not yet involved in monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision.
- In the past, the good links with the federation secondary school have supported transition. The subject leader's plans for assessment will support transition even more with data on achievement at pupil level.
- Entitlement to learn a language in Key Stage 2 is met well.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring that the curriculum clearly identifies progression throughout Key Stage 2
- developing the quality of pupils' written work
- further developing the monitoring and assessment of pupils' achievement both in lessons and to support transition.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop languages in the school.

As I explained previously, a copy of this letter will be published on the Ofsted website. It may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection. Except in the case of academies, a copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

Anne Looney
Her Majesty's Inspector