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Mr Moss
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Dear Mr Moss

Ofsted survey inspection programme – modern languages

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 15 November 2007 to look at work in modern languages (ML).

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.

Schools are expected to provide an entitlement for all pupils in Key Stage 2 to learn a modern language by 2010. As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the subject, the visit had a particular focus on the progress the school is making towards entitlement.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included: interviews with staff and children, scrutiny of relevant documentation, and observation of three lessons.

Achievement and standards

Both German and French are taught in all year groups. Standards are well above average. Overall, progress is excellent.

- Children listen very well and respond promptly and appropriately to the teachers' instructions and questions in the language being taught, for example, when playing games and responding to greetings.
- They recall words from previous sessions very well.
- Their pronunciation and intonation are very good.

- Children identify patterns in the language from text and incorporate what they have learned in their own speaking and writing.
- They are keen to speak and participate in oral activities; all children hold short conversations in French and German, developing social as well as language skills.
- All children are keen to participate in speaking activities in lessons and view learning languages not only as an important skill but also as fun.
- All children are very excited about their current language learning and are keen to learn more.

Quality of teaching and learning in ML

- Lesson planning is excellent, with engaging activities and resources, so that children build very effectively on previous learning.
- The subject knowledge of teachers teaching languages is excellent. Children benefit from excellent role models and their speaking and listening skills are very well developed as a result.
- New language is presented very clearly using visual stimulus, including the interactive white board, so that children rapidly understand and use it successfully themselves.
- Children particularly enjoy learning through songs and games.
- They enjoy speaking activities and they say they would like to do more of this. Opportunities for them to do this for real purposes, to give and gather information, are limited at present.
- German and French are used very effectively in lessons and questioning enables all children to respond successfully. The most able learners are effectively challenged to interpret some unfamiliar language for others.
- Teachers develop children's social skills and intercultural understanding effectively.
- Teachers monitor individual children's learning and give lots of praise; they have a very good idea of how well children are doing.
- There is scope to develop the reading of short texts for pleasure and to increase children's range of language in writing.

Quality of curriculum

- The school offers all children in the school the opportunity to learn both French and German.
- Children have regular sessions for learning languages and the time devoted to this increases as they progress through the school.
- Schemes of work are closely linked to the Languages Framework for Key Stage 2. There is a high level of consistency between French and German.
- Children's achievement in languages is regularly celebrated in the school through assemblies and languages days.

Leadership and management of ML

- There is a very clear rationale for the introduction of languages into the school.
- Assessment procedures are excellent, are beginning to involve children in evaluating their own work and tracking their progress, and ensure continuity and progression in the next stage in learning.
- You and your governors provide very strong support; modern languages are included in the school development plan.
- Although the subject coordinator has only been in post since September she has established a high level of consistency in the teaching of modern languages and very effective systems to monitor progress. She is also closely involved in language training for other teachers in the region.

Implementing languages entitlement

- This is outstanding.
- There is a very effective model of languages provision from Year 1 to Year 6 and a good rationale for it.
- All Key Stage 2 pupils learn two languages and they achieve very well across all four skills.
- Teaching and learning are outstanding.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) is used effectively to enhance teaching and learning both through the use of interactive white boards and children's own use of ICT for research and for presenting their own work.
- Children's progress in languages is assessed and recorded in all four skills and plans are in place for children evaluate their own progress
- Children's have very positive attitudes towards their learning with no differences between boys and girls or between different groups of learners.
- Children's achievement is carefully and effectively monitored and there are very effective arrangements for the transfer of assessment information to the receiving high school.

Inclusion

- This is a strength.
- All children are involved in learning French and German, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities.
- There is a collective determination to make the initiative successful.
- Both boys and girls are keen to learn languages.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- furthering development of information gap activities to engage all children

- increasing opportunities for children to read for pleasure.

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

As I explained in my previous letter, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Judith Tolley
Additional Inspector