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Mrs C Naughton
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Naughton

Ofsted survey inspection programme – modern languages

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and those of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 6 December 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 implementing languages entitlement.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included: interviews with staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, observation of one lesson and other activities.

Achievement and standards

- Pupils have made good progress in the year they have been learning a language.
- The best standards and progress are in Year 6, where pupils speak confidently and understand the spoken and written word well.
- Other year groups are making progress and developing secure foundations for learning in ML.

- Pupils enjoy language learning and show great enthusiasm in using simple language around the school, as well as in ML lessons.
- Pupils in Key Stage 1 are learning to understand the language and culture of their friends from other countries through the 'Language of the term' projects.
- Through links with the teaching of geography, Key Stage 2 pupils are beginning to understand about France and the other countries whose languages they learn.
- All groups are learning well, especially pupils with other first languages and those with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD).
- Pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to speak in the ML because speaking in pairs and groups is under-used in lessons.

Quality of teaching and learning in ML

- Team teaching (a partnership between a native speaker and the class teacher) is a very successful model for delivering ML.
- Teachers then consolidate pupils' learning in short sessions every day.
- The native speaker is providing an outstanding role-model of French in the classroom and is supporting teachers in improving their own standards.
- Activities are imaginative and varied and there are some good examples of role-play to develop pupils' creative use of the language
- The more able pupils do not make progress fast enough because they are not given extended tasks.
- Pupils do not yet understand how well they are doing because assessment is not yet embedded.
- Pupils are sometimes unsure whether to answer in French or English because teachers use too much English in the teaching.

Quality of curriculum

- You provide experience in learning ML for all pupils.
- Language provision includes speaking and learning through games and role-play, extended later to reading and simple writing.
- The QCA scheme of work has been modified successfully to meet your own needs.
- You have developed an imaginative Key Stage 1 curriculum responsive to the needs of your pupils, based on the 'Language of the term' initiative.
- The last term in Key Stage 1 concentrates on French to prepare pupils for Key Stage 2.
- Pupils are currently learning Spanish, Polish and Latvian in Key Stage 1.
- An adult Polish speaker supports teaching in her language. A Latvian pupil and occasionally her parent are role-models for learning their language. In addition to the native French speaker, another teacher has fluent Spanish.

- Spanish is being taught at lunch time this year, but will be absorbed into the curriculum next year.
- There are good resources, including the use of interactive white boards, imaginative use of Powerpoint and a range of reading material and DVDs.

Leadership and management of ML

- The school works in a local consortium to deliver the Key Stage 2 ML entitlement. This consortium is responsible for engaging and allocating the native French speaker to schools.
- A sound rationale and planning and evaluation which can be tracked through the SEF, the school improvement plan and the scheme of work, provide a good basis for work in ML.
- You have embedded monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning, including ML, throughout the school.
- Planning has the full support of governors.
- Parents' responses to your questionnaire are supportive of the ML teaching and learning in the school.
- The school has chosen to develop ML teaching in your school by the use of the ML specialist speakers, working in partnership with school staff. Training is in house by using the native speaker to develop teachers' language skills and this is working well.
- Links are being established with your main partner secondary school but, as the destinations of your pupils are varied, progression and transition strategies are not yet fully in place.

Implementing languages entitlement

- Implementing entitlement is good and in many ways outstanding.
- All pupils in the school learn ML.
- There is an effective model for delivering languages supported by a clear rationale.
- Pupils achieve well in listening and speaking and older pupils are developing skills in reading and writing.
- Pupils enjoy language learning.

Inclusion

- Learning ML has provided a major boost to groups of potentially vulnerable pupils.
- Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) share their home language in 'Language of the term' and pupils with LDD have changed their approach to learning through their enjoyment of and commitment ML.
- Planned tasks to extend the more able pupils are not yet in place.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- further develop pupils' intuitive response in French by limiting the amount of English used by teachers in the classroom and by encouraging them to practise speaking more in pairs and groups
- plan and implement assessment in all four skills and involve pupils in understanding their progress and targets
- plan and implement tasks to extend the more able pupils.

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

Peter Mckenzie
Additional Inspector