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22 October 2009

Mr D Bell  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Bell

Ofsted survey inspection programme – modern languages

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 15 October 2009 to look at work in modern languages (ML).

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the subject, the visit had a particular focus on how well the school is implementing entitlement in Key Stage 2. 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 staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of seven lessons.

Achievement in primary languages

- Pupils enjoy learning languages and boys and girls are equally motivated. They can give a few reasons why it is important to do so and it contributes well to their personal and social development through encouraging collaboration and listening skills.
- Pupils generally listen and respond well to their teachers. Most are willing and confident speakers with reasonable pronunciation. They are starting to be able to match sounds and spellings. Their regular exposure to native speakers through the use of interactive whiteboards as an integral part of the lesson means they are comfortable with simple French spoken at near normal speed.

- Most can read words and sentences with reasonable accuracy because teachers systematically use good, clear resources to reinforce the written version of what they are saying.

### Quality of teaching of primary languages

- There is a consistent approach to language teaching which helps the pupils build on their learning as they progress through the school. Teachers know their pupils well. They use other adults and strategies that are effective in other subjects to ensure individual needs are well catered for.
- Lessons are fun and teachers inject songs and games to ensure they keep the pupils motivated. There is a good mix of skills practiced in the lessons. A variable amount of French is used for routine instructions depriving the pupils of opportunities to develop their listening skills.
- Lesson plans do not always identify ways in which less confident pupils will be supported to develop their speaking skills. This sometimes results in insufficient opportunities to practice in pairs or under the protective cloak of whole class repetition before they are asked to perform publicly.
- Teachers make good use of interactive whiteboards to make learning fun and create a narrative that the pupils enjoy following. More could be done to harness the power of information and communication technology (ICT) to meet individual needs and encourage independent learning.
- It is clear that teachers assess pupils' progress in lessons and make adjustments for individuals where necessary. Further assessment is being planned to enable the school to monitor the progress the pupils make and share the information with parents.
- There are close working relationships within the family of schools and the specialist teacher from the secondary school provides strong support for professional development. Consequently, there are good channels ready for the transfer of information on pupils' progress once the monitoring systems are in place.

### Quality of the curriculum in primary languages

- Time for learning languages each week is good, including time outside of the discreet lesson with some after school clubs. The school does not yet provide any special events to showcase languages but there are firm plans in place to develop links with a French school.
- Medium term planning is good, based on the commercially produced course being followed, with additional reference to the Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages. It meets the needs of learners and clearly contributes to their enjoyment and good progress.

- Pupils were very hesitant when asked about cultural differences and their answers were little more than stereotypes. Pupils said they would like more opportunities to learn about French artists and composers, for example.

#### Effectiveness of leadership and management in primary languages

- A strongly strategic approach to introducing languages across the school has successfully built the school's capacity to be self-sufficient. The coordinator sets a good example by ensuring her skills and subject knowledge are kept up to date through links with local networks and appropriate professional development.
- The ML policy is good. The development plan, linked to the school development plan, highlights appropriate needs. Monitoring of teaching is in the early stages, but helpful developmental feedback from lesson observations by the secondary specialist has been successful in building teachers' confidence and skills.
- The school supports teachers' professional development well and staff are very committed to French across the school as was evident from the energy and enthusiasm with which they delivered their lessons.

#### Progress towards entitlement in Key Stage 2

There is an effective model for the delivery of languages across the school. The carefully structured process for introducing languages into the curriculum has resulted in confident teachers who work closely together to ensure consistency of approach across the school. As a result, pupils enjoy learning French and are making good progress. Assessment processes are developing well and strong links with other schools are helping the development of this and other aspects of provision.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- refining lesson planning to build in more logical sequencing of whole class, pair and individual tasks to ensure the least confident have time to practice in a secure situation before public performance
- increasing the use of French by teachers to ensure pupils have maximum experience of the language being used for communication
- building on the existing good team spirit to share ideas and expertise as teachers' confidence develops.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop modern languages 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

Elaine Taylor  
Her Majesty's Inspector