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Mrs C Walker  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Walker

Ofsted 2009-10 subject survey inspection programme: modern languages

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and for the help of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 9 March 2010 to look at work in modern languages.

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.

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

#### Achievement in languages

- Pupils' recall of words and short phrases is good and they pay good attention to pronunciation and even intonation when they speak. They understand classroom instructions well and also respond well to recorded language.
- They show a good understanding of sound-spelling links and older pupils have a developing grammatical understanding.
- There has been a deliberate focus on speaking and listening although some of the older pupils in Year 5 can write simple, but accurate, sentences based on a model.

- Pupils understand the importance of language learning and are interested in France and its culture. However, their understanding of other countries in the world where French is spoken is limited.
- Pupils' personal development is good. Generally, pupils are positive towards languages although they are very clear that they need to be actively involved in their learning and higher attaining pupils want more challenge. Their confidence in language use is dependent on past experience. Some older pupils are benefiting from a revision programme.

#### Quality of teaching in languages

- Lessons are planned carefully and particularly in the early years have very specific learning objectives. There is a good level of detail in the plans and variety of activity is well catered for.
- Teachers make consistent use of the target language for basic classroom instructions but additional use depends on teachers' confidence. Teachers are well prepared in the key language of the lesson. They stress the need for good pronunciation at all times.
- An impressive array of resources is used. Authentic audio resources are used well to ensure that pupils have a good model of French.
- Occasionally, there is a need for teachers to ensure that any new language is presented in a variety of ways and thoroughly practised before pupils are asked to speak independently.
- Assessment is, as yet, informal, but self-assessment is being used well by all teachers in their lessons.

#### Quality of the curriculum in languages

- The time allocated to the subject is appropriate.
- Lesson plans are tailored well to the needs of each group. The acting coordinator is aware of the need to ensure that there is a coherent whole-school approach to long-term planning for the future. Planning is supported well by a broad range of resources.
- Emphasis on the development of cultural understanding in Years 3 and 4 is good but less so in Years 5 and 6.
- Planning for transition with the partner secondary school is as yet not sufficiently advanced but the planned bridging topic will provide an important link between the primary and secondary curricula.

#### Effectiveness of leadership and management in languages

- You and the governing body are providing good support for the subject's development. The introduction of French has been well and carefully introduced at whole-school level and the initiative is part of the school's development plan.

- There is no formal self-evaluation but the local authority audit has helped you to identify the priority areas for improvement correctly. Although monitoring has been informal, you have a clear idea of strengths and weaknesses of provision as you have retained the overview.
- The acting subject leader has not been able to take over formally because of her newly qualified teacher status but you have supported her well and she is already clear on the priorities for the subject.

Subject issue: how well the school is implementing entitlement in Key Stage 2

- The school has made good progress with introducing a modern language. All pupils in Key Stage 2 learn French and there is a clear rationale for the subject. This rationale focuses well on cultural and linguistic benefits. The process has been planned very methodically and it has considered teachers' skills well. Professional development is ongoing and matched well to teachers' needs. Very good use has been made of local authority support and of the network provided by the local federation.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring, in lessons, that pupils have adequate opportunities to practise new language before being asked to produce it independently, and that they are as actively involved as possible in their learning
- planning at medium-term level for all four skills and for challenge for higher attaining pupils in all lessons
- developing a more formal approach to assessment.

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

As I explained previously 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

Anne Looney  
Her Majesty's Inspector