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Mr N Ryan
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Ryan

Ofsted 2010–11 subject survey inspection programme: modern languages (ML)

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and pupils, during my visit on 6 July 2010 to look at work in 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 without their consent.

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

Achievement in languages

- Pupils make good progress in lessons. Their speaking skills are developing well. Younger pupils can speak a range of phrases with confidence. Older pupils can speak in sentences and hold brief conversations. Their pronunciation is mostly good.
- Writing skills are developing well. Younger pupils can write phrases and short sentences. Pupils in Year 6 can write longer sentences and use definite articles and some adjectives correctly.
- Listening skills are good. Most pupils listen well and understand instructions in French. Reading is satisfactory. Pupils can read individual words and sentences and occasionally read longer texts.
- Pupils' understanding of the usefulness of languages is good. They could explain that languages are useful when on holiday and in a wide range of careers, such as translating, teaching, acting and in the aviation and travel industries.

- Pupils' intercultural understanding is not as well developed as it should be. Although they know some French foods and major cities, they are less aware of the key differences between life in this country and France, French customs and those of other countries where French is spoken.
- Languages make a good contribution to pupils' personal development. They enjoy learning a language and like the different activities they undertake in lessons. Most pupils' behaviour was good.

Quality of teaching in languages

- The teacher's subject knowledge and pronunciation are good. Pupils' mispronunciations are corrected and the pronunciation of new vocabulary is modelled carefully. Teaching of sound-spelling links is good, such as when pupils in a good Year 4 lesson were taught about the pronunciation and spelling of 'septembre' and 'novembre'.
- The target language was used well throughout lessons to greet and praise pupils and to give instructions. Planning was good and identified learning objectives clearly which were explained carefully and revisited at the end of lessons. However, some plenary sessions did not allow enough time for the teacher to assess fully how well new learning had been understood.
- Information and communication technology was used effectively to revise previous learning, introduce new vocabulary and to show examples of native speakers and some aspects of French culture. Pupils have opportunities to use the interactive whiteboard which consolidates their learning and holds their interest.
- A good range of teaching activities, such as games, quizzes, worksheets and team tasks, was used to embed learning and provided good opportunities for pupils to practise speaking. For example, a 'Harry Potter' game required pupils to recall and use phrases that expressed an opinion. On occasion, some activities were too long.

Quality of the curriculum in languages

- The time allocated for the discrete language lesson is suitable. However, class teachers have few other opportunities to reinforce learning.
- Schemes of work are appropriate and topics match pupils' interests. Learning is supported by helpful displays of vocabulary in some classrooms.
- Resources are satisfactory. Dictionaries have been purchased recently. However, few books, comics or magazines are available around the school, or in the library for pupils to read or browse for leisure.
- No extra-curricular activities, such as assemblies, visitors or visits, are provided to enhance pupils' intercultural understanding.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in languages

- You and the governing body are supportive of languages and French features in the school improvement plan. The rationale for learning French

is sound and the model of delivery is currently sustainable. Plans are in place to train class teachers to ensure the long-term sustainability of languages.

- The subject leader provides a model of good teaching, has an accurate view of pupils' strengths and weaknesses and leads her area well. Subject action plans are in place, including one that sets out how French will be extended to all classes in Key Stage 2. An appropriate decision was taken to make one year group repeat a year of French as learning was not embedded properly. Good steps have been taken to ensure that work in this class is challenging and reflects pupils' maturity and previous knowledge.
- The subject leader and other staff have attended suitable training. Resources have been developed and an assessment system adopted.
- The implementation of pupils' entitlement to learn a modern language is good. Pupils in three year groups learn French; information and communication technology is used well; and teaching of writing is clear.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- developing pupils' intercultural understanding
- developing resources and opportunities for pupils to read, including for leisure.

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 sent to your local authority and will be published on the Ofsted website under the URN for your school. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Michael McIlroy
Her Majesty's Inspector