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Ms L Mackay  
Acting Headteacher  
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Dear Ms Mackay

### **Ofsted 2010–11 subject survey inspection programme: modern languages**

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and pupils, during my visit on 23 September 2010 to look at work in modern languages.

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 staff and pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of one lesson.

#### **Achievement in languages**

- Pupils are enthusiastic and participate well in class joyfully. They enjoy the active learning methods and the opportunity to practise in groups and pairs. Some older, higher attaining, pupils say they would like to learn more new words at a time and be challenged more.
- Pupils have very good recall of a wide range of vocabulary and speak with confidence. Their accents and intonation are good and they are keen to get the pronunciation right.
- While pupils have good recall of a breadth of language, their utterances are often at word level rather than at phrase or sentence level. Teachers are aware that this is an area for development.
- Pupils are developing good listening skills and can understand their teacher's sometimes rapid Spanish as well as authentic recorded language.

- They do not write extensively but can write using prompts. Some pupils write at considerable length.
- Pupils understand that Spanish is a world language and have some knowledge of Hispanic culture.

### **Quality of teaching in languages**

- The specialist teacher presents a model of Spanish to the pupils which helps develop their pronunciation greatly. The teacher speaks at speed and encourages pupils to listen hard. Her high linguistic skills are reinforced by the use of DVDs of Spanish-speaking children to which pupils respond very well.
- The teacher makes very good use of the target language for classroom management. However, she could extend this even further, by modelling with the class teacher, what she wants pupils to do and by showing rather than telling.
- Lessons are planned with specific learning objectives and are structured well so that activities build up progressively. The range of activities is lively and involves pupils well. There is use of a variety of good resources. Practice time for the more complex linguistic structures is not always sufficient and this can lead to a little hesitation from pupils in group work. This happens when too much time is spent going over the known rather than concentrating on the extension work.
- Relationships in the classroom are good and the teacher uses her knowledge of the pupils well to target questions.
- Although some assessment is done at the end of the lesson, understanding is not checked during the lesson consistently.
- Summative assessment was trialled effectively last year and will be a useful vehicle to support the exchange of information at transition.

### **Quality of the curriculum in languages**

- The subject, which was introduced some years ago, has now been formalised in terms of regular specialist provision. The time allocated for the specialist lessons is good. Class teachers are involved fully in these lessons and this helps them when they reinforce the language during the week.
- The school is using appropriate published materials to support the teaching of Spanish. The core course is linked well to the Key Stage 2 Framework and ensures coverage of all five strands in the course of a year. The core course has been enhanced well by materials of a more authentic nature.
- Lesson plans are well structured and have clear learning objectives. These are not, as yet, matched to the needs of specific groups or individuals.

- No formal curriculum overview is in place to indicate the milestone targets for each year group and where the school wants the Year 6 pupils to be by the time they leave the school.

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

- A clear vision was established by the previous headteacher and parental support for language learning is good. There is a commitment to inclusion and all teachers are well involved. Events, such as the school's Spanish day and pupils' success in the national 'Foods for Spain' competition, have enhanced the status of the subject.
- The senior leaders and subject leader have a clear picture of strengths and areas for development. The school development plan refers to modern languages but success criteria do not include pupils' achievement. The action plan is a useful document and shows a strategic approach to the development of provision. The plan refers to pupils' outcomes but these are not sufficiently specific.
- The use of feedback from teachers and pupils to monitor the effectiveness of provision is good. A good start has been made in monitoring pupils' progress with the use of the achievement portfolio.
- Good use has been made of local authority support and network groups.
- Entitlement to learn a language in Key Stage 2 is met well.

### **Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:**

- formalising a curriculum map which has milestones for each year group
- ensuring that teaching always challenges all pupils to extend their language skills as well as reinforcing the known.

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 published on the Ofsted website. It may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection. Except in the case of academies, a copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

**Anne Looney**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**