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Mr R Somerwill  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Somerwill

### **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 18 October 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 two lessons.

#### **Achievement in languages**

- Pupils are enthusiastic about languages and respond keenly in class. They particularly enjoy the active tasks their teachers give to them.
- They recall language well and speak with good pronunciation. The language they have learnt, however, is almost all at word level and pupils in Year 6 are not as confident in speaking in sentences as might be expected given their starting points three years ago.
- Pupils are able to copy accurately and some pupils in Years 3 and 4 are able to complete simple matching tasks when reading. As with their speaking, the written work of all pupils, even older ones, is predominantly at word level.
- They listen hard to simple, yet authentic, language and can pick out key words. They understand basic classroom instructions.

- Pupils are developing a good breadth of intercultural understanding and understand why it is important to learn languages.

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

- The school's co-coordinator/specialist teacher of French provides a good model of French for the pupils although her use of French in the classroom is not as extensive as it needs to be to improve pupils' listening skills. Generally too much English is used in sessions where the learning focus is language acquisition. New language is explained rather than presented in a way that maximises the use of French.
- A good range of resources, including authentic French materials, is used.
- Teachers have good organisational skills and create opportunities for pupils to apply what they have learnt in a practical way. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 went into the playground to practise the French games they had seen on a video.
- Teachers are developing cultural awareness effectively and the planned International Day will reinforce that across the school.
- Lessons are planned carefully in terms of the tasks pupils are to complete. However, plans are insufficiently precise in terms of what pupils are expected to learn.
- Some informal assessment takes place. However, there is no formal assessment to inform progression throughout the school or transition to secondary school.

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

- The broad range of planned cross-curricular activities includes work on the Aztecs and the link with Spanish and some simple Japanese learned when learning about the country. These provide pupils with an insight into linguistic difference and help them understand about cultural similarities and difference.
- The school also uses a published scheme to teach French. There has been, and still is, an inconsistency in its use across Key Stage 2 and, as a result, planning for progression in French lacks coherence. Where the scheme is used, it is tailored well to the needs, and ages, of the pupils.
- Displays are used well to establish a modern languages learning environment throughout the school.
- The Spanish club provides a good opportunity outside the curriculum for students to learn about Hispanic countries and to learn some language.

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

- Support for the development of modern languages is good. The aspirations of the senior and middle leaders and the governing body are appropriate and the analysis of the strengths and areas of weakness of modern languages provision is accurate. The school has ensured that the subject has an appropriately broad range of resources.

- Teachers' professional development needs have been well catered for and the coordinator makes enthusiastic use of links with the main secondary school and local networks, both for her subject knowledge development and to keep abreast of what needs to be done in terms of management.
- The modern languages policy is a clear document and establishes a blueprint for the development of the subject. The school development plan, however, identifies well what needs to be done but the targets are insufficiently linked to pupils' outcomes. The school is not yet bringing together all the modern language experiences it offers in a coherent plan which identifies exactly what it wants pupils to learn, and which builds in routes of progression for skills development.
- Entitlement to learn a language in Key Stage 2 is met satisfactorily.

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

- establishing a clear rationale of exactly what you want your pupils to experience and learn in a modern languages curriculum both in terms of intercultural understanding and the development of language learning skills
- ensuring that short-term planning has precise learning objectives
- using as much target language as possible in the classroom as a model for pupils' own use and to develop their listening skills.

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**