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Mrs C Haigh
Headteacher
St Paul's CofE Primary School
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Dear Mrs Haigh

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 8 March 2011 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 make good progress in French and are able to work independently when given the opportunity.
- They say that they enjoy learning languages and can explain the value in doing so. Behaviour is outstanding and pupils are keen to learn and to do well.
- They strive to use the language to communicate in lessons and use the language for routine communication, for example in using greetings and saying 'please' and 'thank you' in, and beyond, the classroom.
- Listening and reading skills are well developed as a result of their exposure to the language in the classroom and because of the effective use of texts.
- Pupils read aloud successfully, applying pronunciation rules even when meeting new words for the first time. Their pronunciation and intonation

are good as a result of the use of the target language in lessons and because they benefit from an excellent role model. They have a good knowledge and understanding of French festivals and other cultural aspects of the language, for instance, art, food and drink and French-speaking countries.

- Writing is usually accurate with good attention paid to correct spellings. Pupils can apply grammatical rules to new situations, for example, related to gender and number.
- Most are keen to volunteer in whole-class oral activities. However, many are too dependent on written notes or the teacher when completing speaking tasks.

Quality of teaching in languages

- The target language is used effectively in lessons and, as a result, pupils respond promptly and appropriately to questioning and to instructions in French.
- Presentations and explanations are clear, using visuals and the interactive whiteboard, so that pupils rapidly understand new language and are able to apply patterns successfully. Nonetheless, opportunities are missed for pupils to identify patterns in the language for themselves.
- Games and matching activities engage pupils and consolidate learning effectively. Visual clips and interactive programs are used to good effect to develop pupils' listening skills and to expose them to a variety of voices and accents in French.
- Texts are used well to enable pupils to perfect their pronunciation and intonation and enable them to write and read aloud with accuracy.
- Teacher-led activities are often lengthy and, as such, limit the opportunities pupils have to use the language themselves. When pupils are given the opportunity to work in pairs and small groups to practise informally, they make good progress and increase in confidence and competence in using the language. However, this is often restricted to rehearsal.
- Assessment is used well to plan and track pupils' progress and understanding in all four skills. Marking is regular and gives good guidance about how to improve. Activities are well matched to pupils' capabilities and appropriate support is provided in lessons so that different groups can complete tasks successfully.

Quality of the curriculum in languages

- All pupils in Key Stage 2 learn French. It is taught by a specialist. However, because the subject is provided one hour each week and pupils have to be reminded of previous learning, their progress is slowed. Schemes of work ensure continuity and progression and a good balance between the introduction of new language and opportunities to revisit and consolidate what has previously been learnt. Opportunities are taken to

practise basic skills, for instance, numeracy, literacy and information and communication technology skills in language lessons.

- Pupils benefit from the opportunity to explore links with other languages and to explore French culture, including art, fashion and history through the French Day each year. They speak enthusiastically about this and about visits from French speakers from the local rugby team. They also value the way they can access resources outside lessons and at home through the school's website.
- Links with the high school are underdeveloped. However, the school is able to transfer detailed information about pupils' attainment and progress in French to ensure continuity and progression in Year 7.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in languages

- Self-evaluation and development planning are clearly focused on improving provision and raising attainment in the subject.
- Your senior leadership team provides strong support for the development of languages within the school. The school promotes and reinforces language learning well through display and through, for example, the labelling of art work in French and different rooms within the school.
- The specialist teacher participates in the network of local teachers to share good practice and keep abreast of initiatives in language teaching.
- Class teachers support learning in modern languages by using counting rhymes and practising greetings at appropriate times through the week, for instance when taking the register.
- Teaching assistants are skilful in supporting individuals and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities in lessons so that they are able to learn effectively alongside their classmates.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- increasing opportunities for pupils to practise informally and to use the language for real purposes
- increasing opportunities for pupils to work independently and solve problems, for example, to identify patterns in the language for themselves.

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

Judith Tolley
Additional Inspector