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Mr M Snowden
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Snowden

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 10 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, a governor and pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of one lesson.

Achievement in languages

- Older pupils have well-developed listening skills, mainly because of the teacher's extensive use of Spanish in lessons. Pupils adapt themselves well to the amount of target language and are confident, even when they do not understand every word, that they know what is required of them.
- Pupils do not use the language themselves as confidently, and need to rely too much on the written word for support.
- Written work completed by older pupils shows that some higher ability pupils can write letters. The majority, however, are still working at word level.
- Pupils are developing good reference skills, using dictionaries to extend their written work.
- Pupils' intercultural understanding is good and they show a good knowledge of Spanish being a world language.

- Pupils at Key Stage 1 are relishing the chance to learn a modern language. They can recall language recently learnt and recite it clearly and with good accents. The response of pupils in Key Stage 2 is more varied. They understand the value of learning a language and enjoy the active nature of what they do in lessons. Some pupils say, however, that a number of their peers do not behave as well as they might in lessons and that this disrupts the learning of others on occasions.

Quality of teaching in languages

- The teacher has high expectations of the pupils' understanding, is enthusiastic about the subject and has good subject knowledge. She also shows a good understanding of how language learning needs to be developed.
- The teacher uses the target language extensively in lessons but her expectations of pupils' use are not as high. Too often, pupils are allowed to rely on the written word when they are speaking.
- Lesson plans show that attention is being paid to the different needs of the pupils. In the lesson observed, however, not all pupils were equally engaged or involved in the work.
- A good range of resources is used, including technology, to engage the interest of pupils.
- At the moment, the amount of follow-up teaching done during the week is variable.

Quality of the curriculum in languages

- The curriculum is, at present, in a state of transition. It is moving from a position where modern languages was seen as a discrete subject, to a position where it serves the needs of the broader curriculum, by being taught in a more cross-curricular way.
- The coordinator plans well to ensure that the language supports what pupils are learning with their class teachers, but it is not possible to see how progression in linguistic terms is being planned for.
- The school's links with, and visit to, its partner school in Motril in Spain have clearly played a significant role in promoting modern languages, as have events such as the Spanish day and the fact that the school achieved the 'Spanish School of the Year Award' in 2008.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in languages

- You are promoting well the potential for modern languages to play a central role in the development of pupils' cultural understanding and their awareness of themselves as global citizens.
- You have clearly recognised that if modern languages are to have a cross-curricular impact, they cannot be part of a curriculum taught in teachers' planning, preparation and assessment time.

- The coordinator guides class teachers well to additional resources and training opportunities.
- The coordinator's report covers a good analysis of the key areas of provision, but there is insufficient analysis of how well pupils are achieving. Data on outcomes are insufficient, as assessment is not systematically planned for.
- Entitlement to learn a language in Key Stage 2 is met satisfactorily.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- creating a coherent plan of delivery for the teaching of Spanish by ensuring that both the cross-curricular approach and linguistic progression are planned for
- ensuring that lessons engage and meet the needs of all pupils
- building on the good work done on the development of pupils' listening skills and developing greater confidence in their speaking.

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