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Mrs R Shaw
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Shaw

Ofsted 2011–12 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 15 June 2011 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 staff and pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of two lessons and a physical activity session.

Achievement in ML

- Pupils of all ages listen carefully and can speak confidently at word level and with phrases they have practised extensively. Their pronunciation is good and is benefiting from the stress laid on phonics by the teachers. Pupils copy accurately at word level but the accuracy of longer sentences is less consistent across the ability range. Pupils can use context well to support their comprehension of authentic children's books.
- Pupils are enthusiastic and volunteer readily in class. They enjoy 'playing with' the new sounds and are proud when they get it right. They persevere even when the work is difficult. They work well in groups.
- They have some grammatical understanding but this is not an area that is well developed. They are developing good language learning skills and use bilingual dictionaries with confidence.

- Pupils have a developing understanding of the cultures of the countries where French and Spanish are spoken. Older pupils show a good understanding of the value of learning a language.

Quality of teaching in ML

- Teachers show enthusiasm for the language that they are teaching. They present clear models of French or Spanish to the pupils and lay an appropriately strong emphasis on accurate pronunciation.
- Teachers use a range of lively activities to revise and reinforce language and endeavour to get all pupils involved in oral activities. Activities at the beginning of lesson are particularly effective in this respect. Teachers manage classes well.
- The use of Spanish and French by teachers is not consistent and English is used more readily as activities become more complicated.
- Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and this can result, occasionally, in too much new language being presented at once with insufficient time for pupils to practise and become confident. In these situations, lower attaining pupils in particular need more support.
- Teachers are aware of the levels at which their pupils are working but no formal assessment is yet in place.

Quality of the curriculum in ML

- There is an outline scheme of work which defines the topics to be taught. The school has appropriately delayed detailed planning until the new 4 to 19 academy curriculum plans are finalised. In the meantime, the subject leader has helped teachers to share practice and she has already identified structured planning as a priority for development.
- The planned modern languages day should extend pupils' intercultural understanding as classes share their research about their chosen European country. The school makes good use of pupils and parents from other countries to extend pupils' knowledge of other cultures.
- Displays support language learning well and raise the status of the French and Spanish in the school.
- The taught curriculum is enhanced by a well-attended after-school club.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in ML

- You show a good commitment to this relatively newly introduced subject. You recognised that the need to develop teacher confidence was a priority and this has been sensitively handled.
- You and the subject leader have developed a clear rationale for the subject and have focused well on the bigger picture of ML in the 4 to 19 curriculum. There is a shared enthusiasm for languages across the school.
- The self-evaluation of the subject is accurate and appropriate priorities for development have been identified. The school has made good use of

pupils' views to inform this process. The current action plans, however, lack specific and measurable success criteria.

- The subject leader is well organised. She has been heavily involved in a cross-phase phonics project, the impact of which has already been positively commented on by the Year 7 teachers in the secondary school.
- The subject leader is monitoring planning well and has a good overview of pupil outcomes. She has not yet monitored the quality of teaching in any formal way.
- You show a good awareness of the importance of training in this new subject and you have encouraged others in the learning community to work together to that end. You have made good use of the expertise of the secondary subject leader to support developments.
- Entitlement to learn a language in Key Stage 2 is met satisfactorily

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- developing a scheme of work which identifies what should be taught, gives guidance on how it might be taught and clarifies how ML should be assessed
- ensuring that pupils are given structured support when activities are complex
- devoting sufficient time to practice before pupils are asked to speak at length.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop ML 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