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Mrs P Ganley
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Ganley

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 24 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 one lesson and a video conference with a partner primary school.

Achievement in ML

- All groups of pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress in German. They are confident speakers with good pronunciation and intonation. They are able to apply sound rules accurately when reading short phrases aloud.
- They display enthusiasm and enjoyment in language learning, are keen to learn more languages and say that they would like more time to do so.
- Pupils can label accurately and most apply rules, such as capital letters for nouns, accurately. They write short sentences to describe themselves, their family and likes and preferences and can use the language imaginatively, for instance, to describe monsters that they have drawn.
- Speaking, writing and reading are developing well. Listening and responding are less well developed: pupils are able to identify key words from unfamiliar songs, but lack confidence in responding to a range of

familiar questions in a random order or dealing with some unfamiliar language in routine instructions.

- Pupils can talk about some aspects of school life, Christmas and food that are different in Germany.
- Pupils appreciate the value of learning languages in relation to the expectations at high school and visiting Germany.

Quality of teaching in ML

- Teachers have high expectations with regard to pronunciation, intonation and accuracy in writing. They use songs, games and pair and whole-class activities effectively to increase pupils' confidence and competence in speaking, listening and reading.
- All pupils make good progress - a result of the emphasis on speaking in lessons. However, opportunities are missed to challenge more able linguists further. For example, through the more effective use of the target language; more opportunities for them to use more than one skill in completing tasks; and through developing research skills so that they can reply in more detail to questions from their partners in emails.
- Activities are well planned and sequenced and pair and whole-class activities are used imaginatively so that pupils build effectively on previous learning and increase in confidence and competence. For example, pupils began a lesson unsure of different colours in German and were able to ask about each other's preferences, respond promptly in full sentences and take part in a song responding to visual cues by the end of the lesson.
- Imaginative use is made of videoconferencing to develop pupils' confidence and skill at responding to a range of questions at random and understanding key language in songs. Text is used effectively to enable pupils to identify patterns in the language and develop reading skills.
- Marking is regular and gives pupils good guidance about how to improve their work. Individual progress, however, is not yet assessed or recorded. As a result, pupils are unsure of how they are getting on and precise information about their progress cannot be sent to the high school to ensure continuity and progression.

Quality of the curriculum in ML

- Schemes of work place an appropriate emphasis on speaking and listening and provide opportunities for pupils to meet new language and structures and to revisit previously learnt language.
- Timetabled lessons are limited to 30 minutes, once a week. Class teachers attend these lessons and are able to access online resources to reinforce learning, for example, when taking the register, at other times during the week.
- Pupils have regular contact with native German speakers through the video link and through visitors to the school. Pupils can identify pupils in their classes who speak other languages at home but have little knowledge or understanding of their cultures or languages.

- Pupils use information and communication technology for videoconferencing with a partner school in Germany and another primary school in Manchester and to receive and send emails to the link school in Germany. In German Club, they are able to use language programmes to hone their skills of reading, writing and listening. Teachers use the interactive whiteboard to present ideas clearly and to provide access to native speakers. Pupils have access to some reading materials in German and use bilingual dictionaries and glossaries to check meaning and increase their range of vocabulary.
- Links with the high school are underdeveloped and do not ensure continuity and progression into Year 7.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in ML

- Links with other schools ensure that teachers are well informed about current developments in language learning. Teachers share a common purpose and good opportunities to share practice, discuss the teaching and learning in ML and gain access to professional development.
- The senior leadership team provides strong support for modern languages. Monitoring of provision is regular but informal.
- Display and labelling around the school support language learning well.
- Entitlement to learn a language in Key Stage 2 is met well.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- improving the use of assessment so that pupils understand how they are doing and how they can improve their work
- providing more effective challenge for more able linguists through the use of the target language in lessons and increasing opportunities for them to use more than one skill in tasks
- improving links with the high school in order to ensure continuity and progression into Key Stage 3.

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

Judith Tolley
Additional Inspector