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Mrs D Eveleigh
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Eveleigh

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 27 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.

Achievement in ML

- Pupils speak confidently when talking about their names and ages. They are less confident with more recently learnt language. Their pronunciation is good and is aided by a good understanding of the differences between the spoken and the written word in French. They listen carefully and understand how important it is to do so. The development of their listening skills is constrained, however, by the amount of English used by teachers in lessons. Pupils are developing the skills of using context to support their comprehension of texts and they all enjoyed the fact that they had read an authentic book in French and had reviewed it. They do not write much before Years 5 and 6 but they are copying correctly.
- Older pupils understand some basic grammatical rules, for example on gender and verb endings, but they cannot all apply them confidently.
- Pupils try hard in class, although sometimes their lack of confidence stops them from volunteering as readily as they might. They really enjoy the active tasks which get them doing and moving and do not enjoy sitting still

and listening for too long. Pupils of all ages believe that learning a language is important and can justify their opinions.

- Pupils' cultural understanding of the countries where French is spoken is limited but they are developing a broader intercultural understanding through links with visitors from Eastern Europe.

Quality of teaching in ML

- Class teachers have readily taken on the role of ML teachers and show an enjoyment of the subject. They plan for, and use, a range of resources so that pupils have access to authentic spoken and written French. They plan for variety in the lessons, but there are too many activities and there is insufficient emphasis on pupils talking in French. In an attempt to be lively, teachers move on too quickly to the next activity rather than allowing pupils to have opportunities to hear and respond to the language and then practise it.
- Teachers generally present a clear model of French when presenting new language, but are not using enough French to manage the classroom activities. They explain in English, rather than model in French, what pupils should be doing.
- The activities are not sufficiently matched to the pupils' needs and written texts and recordings can be too long for lower ability pupils without support to help them to understand.
- Teachers make good use of information and communication technology (ICT) as a resource for presentation and practice and older pupils are using ICT to support their writing.
- Teachers are making good use of the portfolios where pupils record when they can do. They have also made a good start in the use of self-assessment activities with their pupils.

Quality of the curriculum in ML

- The curriculum is based on a commercial scheme and addresses the key elements of the Key Stage 2 framework. It has been appropriately adapted to meet the needs of the pupils.
- The current Years 5 and 6 are not following the same scheme as the younger pupils and so it is not easy to see how coherence is being ensured.
- Time allocated for ML is sufficient, particularly when it is enhanced by class teacher follow-up.
- The good displays in the classrooms support pupils' learning and show pupils that ML is an integral part of the curriculum.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in ML

- You show strong support for the subject to the point that it is included in the curriculum throughout the school, not just in Key Stage 2. You have a clear rationale for the subject which is shared well with the other teachers.

The ML policy underpins the development of the subject well and makes explicit, for example, the aims and how the subject can address a range of learning styles.

- There is no formal monitoring or evaluation of the subject at the moment although you have a very accurate picture of the strengths and areas for development. You are also clear on what constitutes good teaching in ML.
- The subject leader has made some initial links with the secondary school which most of your pupils attend and she ensures that pupils' portfolios go with them when they start their new school. She has also audited competence in French and has a good understanding of teachers' skills and how they might best be deployed.
- Parents and carers are well informed about what pupils are doing in French.
- Entitlement to learn a language in Key Stage 2 is met satisfactorily.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- greater use of French by teachers in the management of classroom activities
- developing further the pupils' cultural understanding
- linking the curriculum planning throughout Key Stage 2 to ensure coherence and progression.

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