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Mr Andrew Jenkins  
Headteacher  
Dovecote Primary and Nursery School  
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Dear Mr Jenkins

**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 20 September 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; interview with a parent; and observation of one lesson.

The overall effectiveness of ML is good.

**Achievement in ML**

Achievement in ML is good.

- Lessons are fun and pupils understand the usefulness of language learning well. As a result, they are enthusiastic and committed to their studies. They develop particularly good pronunciation because the teacher uses Spanish regularly to manage the lessons and presents them with a good model to emulate. Pupils read aloud well because they have a good understanding of the links between sounds and their spellings.
- Pupils' writing shows that they make good progress and produce short texts by Year 6. As they progress through the school, they use Spanish increasingly creatively both orally and in writing. Some pupils can apply

grammatical rules to new situations and are familiar from an early stage with technical grammatical terms.

- Pupils are regularly required to listen to instructions in Spanish and they respond promptly. They particularly enjoy reading stories with the teacher.
- Pupils are developing a good understanding of the culture of Spain and an excellent understanding of the wider reasons for the spread of Spanish across the New World, as a result of a cross-curricular project on Christopher Columbus and through interesting and eye-catching classroom displays.
- All groups of pupils make good progress and none are excluded from language lessons. The school provided examples of pupils succeeding in ML who struggle elsewhere in the curriculum.

### **Quality of teaching in ML**

The quality of teaching in ML is good.

- The specialist teacher has a good level of subject knowledge and understanding of effective language teaching and learning and uses her knowledge of primary teaching to good effect. Lessons are imaginative with lots of active participation from the pupils. They include routines in Spanish to increase confidence, the use of mime to reinforce meaning, songs to support memorisation and regular reinforcement of prior learning.
- The teacher's sensitive correction of pupils' errors when speaking Spanish and strategies, such as the use of puppets support less confident pupils.
- The lesson observed was well planned and had learning objectives with different levels of challenge for different abilities. Some opportunities were missed to extend the challenge for the most able linguists.
- Teaching and support assistants support all pupils and contribute very effectively to assessment procedures.
- Much has been done to develop an assessment process which allows issues to be identified and addressed at both individual pupil and whole class or topic level. A simple and effective system using stickers helps pupils to understand how well they are progressing. Parents and carers receive regular reports on their child's progress.

### **Quality of the curriculum in ML**

The quality of the curriculum in ML is good.

- The curriculum has a number of significant strengths. It is imaginative and designed to meet the full range of pupils' needs.
- There is good time allocation and the specialist session is supported exceptionally well across the curriculum. There are numerous examples of

cross-curricular projects which have a positive impact on pupils' achievement and very good enrichment opportunities. The learning environment supports pupils' development well.

- Schemes of work contain sufficient detail on the topics to be covered and on how pupils will deepen their understanding as they move through them. It is not clear where the more able pupils will be given opportunities to extend their skills or how information and communication technology will be used.
- Good links with other schools support pupils' engagement with languages. This includes links with schools in Spain, Uganda and Germany. A specialist teacher from the local secondary school delivers sample French lessons to older pupils in order to support transition.

### **Effectiveness of leadership and management in ML**

The effectiveness of leadership and management in ML is good.

- You and your senior leaders are very clear about the need to expand horizons for your pupils. This has resulted in a clear commitment to, and rationale for, the development of the subject and languages have a high profile in the school.
- Activities to monitor and evaluate provision and practice are regular and lead to accurate self-evaluation which in its turn leads to good development planning focused clearly on pupil outcomes.
- Full entitlement has been in place for some time and there are ongoing strategies to ensure that class teachers are well trained to support effectively in the supplementary sessions throughout the week.
- The subject leader reports to governors in line with other subjects and there are plans for a link governor to be established to ensure the subject continues to develop.

### **Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:**

- further increasing the progress of more able pupils by:
  - ensuring that all planning highlights opportunities for them to develop their spontaneous use of language
  - providing more opportunities in lessons for them to be challenged to act as leaders

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop ML in the school.

As 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. A copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

**Elaine Taylor**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**