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Mrs N Smith
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Smith

Ofsted 2011–12 subject survey inspection programme: modern languages (ML)

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and pupils during my visit on 8 February 2012 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.

The overall effectiveness of ML is good.

Achievement in ML

Achievement in ML is good.

- Pupils enjoy their French lessons and are enthusiastic about learning languages. They understand why it is important to learn other languages and they make good progress, so that by the end of Key Stage 2 they have reached a level of attainment that prepares them very well for secondary school.
- Pupils are very willing to engage in oral tasks and do so with generally good pronunciation, both asking and answering questions. They work effectively on their own and in pairs and groups. The older pupils are starting to develop an understanding of the structure of French. Some, who have been attending the lunchtime French club, demonstrate very

well-developed listening skills and all pupils are confident when listening to recordings of native speakers.

- Pupils are starting to understand sound-spelling links and by Year 6 can compose short paragraphs in accurate language.
- They have a good knowledge and understanding of everyday life in the countries where French is spoken, but less knowledge about French art or music.

Quality of teaching in ML

The quality of teaching in ML is good.

- Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and pupils take pride in their work. Written work is accurate and includes opportunities to be creative. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and give encouraging, although not always developmental, feedback.
- The subject leader has supported class teachers effectively to develop their skills in teaching ML. As a result, teachers have a confident and growing level of specialist expertise which they use well in planning and teaching languages.
- Teachers are developing their use of French to manage classroom routines and they build praise and simple commands into lessons from an early stage. Good use is made of recordings of native speakers to develop pupils' understanding of the spoken word.
- Lessons are planned carefully, providing a range of engaging activities. Occasionally, the activities do not relate directly to the lesson objective, especially for the least able pupils, and written work is over-used in some lessons. Teachers sometimes require pupils to move to active use of new language before all have had sufficient time to practise in repetition exercises, which hinders their fluency and can reinforce errors.
- Assessment opportunities are built into lessons and pupils are supported well to assess their own and each other's work. Formal assessment and the tracking of pupils' progress are yet to be developed.

Quality of the curriculum in ML

The quality of the curriculum in ML is satisfactory.

- The curriculum has been developed to ensure it meets the needs of pupils in the primary phase and supports them as they move to secondary school. It relates well to the national framework for ML. Pupils have a weekly language lesson lasting for one hour and this is developed throughout the week by class teachers.
- Teachers make use of a good range of resources, drawing sensibly on commercial courses adapted to the school context. The use of technology is underdeveloped in some lessons and pupils have limited opportunities to use computers to support their learning.

- The scheme of work highlights assessment opportunities. As the subject has been introduced in stages, progression is less clearly identified. Some of the learning objectives used with older pupils are not appropriate for use in the early years of learning the language.
- Productive links with the main receiving secondary school are ensuring that strategies to support transition are developing well.
- A lunchtime French club and enrichment days with a focus on languages enhance the curriculum. Good use is made of displays to help pupils to remember previously learned language.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in ML

The effectiveness of leadership and management in ML is good.

- You and your senior team support the development of ML well and demonstrate a good understanding of the needs of the subject. A clear rationale has been developed for delivering French, with good attention paid to ensuring that the model is sustainable.
- The subject leader has developed the team of class teachers effectively so they are taking an increasingly independent role in delivering the weekly French sessions.
- The school and the subject development plans highlight appropriate targets and success criteria and are regularly reviewed. Self-evaluation draws on external evidence as well as that from internal monitoring. Governors are also involved through the link governor for the subject.
- The subject is enjoyed by pupils who make good progress and staff are dedicated to improving provision further.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- developing medium-term planning to include clear learning objectives for each unit and then support less confident teachers with devising appropriate objectives for each lesson, so the activities they provide are clearly linked to the objectives for all levels of ability
- extending the range of repetition exercises to ensure that all have had sufficient practice before moving to using new language for themselves.

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