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Mr T Draper  
Headteacher  
Water Hall Primary School  
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Dear Mr Draper

**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 1 March 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 satisfactory.

**Achievement in ML**

Achievement in ML is satisfactory.

- Since the subject was formally introduced in September, pupils have made good progress. They are developing good pronunciation of the limited range of language to which they have so far been exposed.
- Pupils enjoy their language lessons enormously and engagement is high for both boys and girls. Pupils in Year 6 can already string together sentences with a degree of creativity.
- The five primary language strands are considered in the planning, but it is too soon for some of the strands to be developed as well as others. Pupils have a limited understanding of the culture of Spain at this stage.
- Pupils see languages as important for social reasons and because the subject adds to their enjoyment by allowing them to learn new things.

## **Quality of teaching in ML**

The quality of teaching in ML is satisfactory.

- Teaching in the weekly language session is good and, as a result, pupils have made a good start to language learning and good progress especially in speaking. Class teachers sit in on the sessions and learn alongside the pupils. Plans are in place to provide language training, so they can be responsible for parts of the lesson and the follow-up sessions from next year.
- The discrete language lessons are well planned with a range of activities that is fun and engaging. Games are used well to encourage speaking and the pupils love the many songs that support their recall of classroom commands and simple vocabulary.
- Text is used well as a cue for speaking, especially through the commercial resources used with the interactive whiteboards. Little reading is involved at this stage, but stories are very effective in helping pupils, especially the younger ones, to remember longer phrases.
- Good use is made of Spanish to manage activities in the classroom.
- Assessment is yet to be developed. Within lessons, the repetition phase is not always used to highlight where the less confident need more time to perfect new words.

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

The quality of the curriculum in ML is satisfactory.

- The present curriculum model is appropriate to the stage of implementation.
- Progression is not yet built in, as all are beginners. Some of the classes involve pupils from different year groups. Since they have all just started to learn Spanish, it is appropriate that they all cover the same topics.
- The half-hour slot is adequate, but not systematically reinforced during the week.
- Schemes of work are clear about the topics to be covered, but lack detail regarding progression in skill development or opportunities to develop inter-cultural understanding. Little use is made of display to support this aspect of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- No links are in place with Spain at present, but plans to work towards the International School award include developing this aspect.

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management in ML is satisfactory.

- You have supported the introduction of ML in a timeframe which is appropriate to the school and its context.

- The school has a clear rationale for the current provision and school development planning outlines well both present and future practice. The absence of a detailed subject development plan weakens the potential to meet the aspirations for the subject. Monitoring activities are limited at present.
- The subject coordinator is committed to developing the subject despite her limited subject expertise and the demands of her other commitments.
- Teachers have satisfactory access to professional development through opportunities to work alongside the subject specialist. A limiting factor is the part-time nature of his contract, which prohibits ongoing and regular discussion of the joint lessons.
- Progress towards entitlement is satisfactory with some good elements, such as the fact that four year groups study Spanish. Lesson content is well designed and includes some explicit teaching of reading and writing. Pupils have positive attitudes towards languages, and boys and girls are equally well motivated.

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

- adding detail to the subject development plan in order to secure the meeting of the aspirations in the subject policy
- exploring opportunities to share practice and provide mutual development for class teachers
- strengthening schemes of work to provide clearer insight into progression, especially for mixed-age classes
- building greater opportunities to increase pupils' inter-cultural understanding.

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**