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Mr D Mulkeen
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Mulkeen

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 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 good.

Achievement in ML

Achievement in ML is satisfactory, but improving rapidly and securely.

- Achievement is variable across the school. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are making satisfactory progress, but their attainment is low because they have only been studying French for two years. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 make much better progress, as the entitlement to learning a modern foreign language is now fully implemented.
- Pupils enjoy learning French. They listen well to their teachers and speak confidently, taking great delight in playing games and saying rhymes in the foreign language. For example, in one outstanding lesson, pupils sang along happily to a recording of a French song while they got on with other related tasks. For the most part, their pronunciation is accurate and does not inhibit communication.

- Listening skills are well developed and pupils enjoy reading books, such as 'Little Red Riding Hood', in French. Pupils can read and write words and short sentences; however, literacy skills are underdeveloped in older pupils as they rarely have the opportunity to read and write extended texts independently.
- Pupils work productively with each other in lessons and say that they particularly enjoy French and European 'fun days', when they have the opportunity to use foreign currency, taste food from other countries and make French bread.

Quality of teaching in ML

The quality of teaching in ML is good.

- Teachers communicate high expectations and their own thrill in learning foreign languages highly effectively to pupils. Carefully planned, imaginative activities guide and support pupils to communicate willingly in French. Teachers have a strong understanding of how best to teach a language and time is used very productively in lessons. However, opportunities are sometimes missed to use French as the normal means of communication in the classroom.
- No expense has been spared to provide up-to-date, intriguing resources that ensure that pupils enjoy their lessons and help them to learn. Information and communication technology is used highly effectively. For example, teachers record pupils speaking and they have the opportunity to assess each other when it is played back and give advice on how to improve.
- Support from learning assistants is highly effective because they demonstrate enthusiasm for learning languages themselves. This ensures that all pupils, of whatever ability, can participate in and enjoy language lessons.
- Assessment is conducted by classroom teachers in all four skills. However, procedures for formal assessment and accreditation are at the early stages of development.

Quality of the curriculum in ML

The quality of the curriculum in ML is good.

- The curriculum is broad and enriched by many cross-curricular projects that improve pupils' intercultural understanding. The appreciation of, and respect for, other cultures permeates the life of the school. Displays are beautifully presented and eye-catching, transporting pupils to many parts of the world and stimulating their imagination.
- Special events showcase languages and the school has developed highly productive links with local secondary schools to support provision. As a result of the link with a specialist language college, the school choir is taking part in an event called 'Not the Eurovision Song Contest'. The school has also forged links with schools in other parts of Europe through

a 'Comenius' project. In this way, pupils have had the opportunity to have first-hand contact with people from other cultures.

- Pupils are aware that they can use the internet and reference books to learn more about France and they are keen to do so. Pupils have a good understanding of French culture, given their stage of development.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in ML

The effectiveness of leadership and management in ML is good.

- Leadership at all levels now shows a commitment to the promotion of language learning and has promoted a shared vision for the development of the curriculum in this respect. The school believes strongly that the learning of a language can improve pupils' self-confidence and broaden their horizons.
- Languages have a high profile in the school, for example all rooms and facilities are labelled in French, and considerable resources have been directed at the development of this area of the curriculum.
- Procedures for rigorous monitoring and evaluation are thoroughly embedded. Plans for the further development of the subject are highly focused on raising achievement for all pupils. However, the formal monitoring of individual pupils' progress is at an initial stage of development.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- raising achievement further by:
 - creating more opportunities for pupils to improve their reading and writing skills as they move up through the school
 - developing and embedding strategies to encourage the use of French as the normal means of communication in the classroom
 - introducing formal procedures for assessment and accreditation in order that the school may better monitor pupils' progress.

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

Joan Davis
Her Majesty's Inspector