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Mrs H Craven
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Craven

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 12 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, pupils and trainee teachers from France; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of lessons.

The overall effectiveness of ML is good.

Achievement in ML

Achievement in ML is good.

- Pupils enjoy lessons and are enthusiastic about learning languages. They make good progress and by the end of Key Stage 2, they have reached a level of attainment that prepares them very well for secondary school.
- Pupils confidently engage in oral tasks. Their pronunciation and intonation are generally good. Older pupils are beginning to apply grammatical rules to new situations and can form compound sentences accurately.
- Language-learning strategies are integrated into lessons and the same terminology for building sentences is used in relation to both French and English. Songs and rhymes are frequently included in lessons so pupils are beginning to make sound-spelling links through these.

- Pupils are also introduced to stories and simple texts, so by the end of Key Stage 2, they can skim, scan and understand the gist of basic texts.

Quality of teaching in ML

The quality of teaching in ML is good.

- All teachers convey enthusiasm to their pupils. The two ML coordinators have very good subject knowledge and a sound understanding of subject pedagogy which they disseminate to the other teachers.
- Lesson planning is thorough and pupils benefit from a variety of interactive activities supported by imaginative use of resources, including puppets, songs, games and mini whiteboards. Teachers use technology well to engage pupils and to support learning, including interactive whiteboards, netbooks, Flickr and the learning platform which has links to ML websites.
- Teachers are beginning to use the language being studied effectively for praise and some classroom instructions, as well as to present and practise new language.
- Pupils are supported to engage with the lesson well, because teachers provide activities that are at a level appropriate to their ability. In addition, effective use is made of teaching assistants and other adults to support individuals. Different levels of challenge are included for more able pupils although these are not yet used consistently in all lessons.
- Formative assessment opportunities are integrated into all lessons and the ML coordinators regularly support teachers in the monitoring and evaluation of pupils' work. Termly summative assessments take place and use the school's own bespoke proforma to record progress, as well as the European Languages Portfolio.

Quality of the curriculum in ML

The quality of the curriculum in ML is outstanding.

- ML has a high profile in the curriculum and is embedded across all year groups from nursery through to year 6. As well as the weekly timetabled sessions, ML is reinforced daily through a cross-curricular approach which provides meaningful and effective ways for pupils to learn another language, plus opportunities to celebrate additional languages.
- The ML coordinators have produced schemes of work linked closely to the Key Stage 2 framework, and progression is clearly built. Different levels of challenge are included to extend pupils' language development and information and communication technology is also used to consolidate and extend learning.
- Pupils have benefited from an impressive range of opportunities to experience different cultures, including email links with a school in China; communications with a teacher travelling abroad through Skype, postcards, emails, photographs; French trainee teachers in lessons and assemblies; planning a residential visit to France; and celebrating different events and festivals, for example, European Day of Languages (focusing

on Spanish), Eid, Diwali, and the Chinese New Year. Pupils who have come from other countries share information and some simple phrases in their first language through an interactive display in the library area.

- Excellent reinforcement and enhancement of learning is achieved through displays in classrooms and corridors helping pupils to remember previously learned language or information about other cultures.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in ML

The effectiveness of leadership and management in ML is outstanding.

- The leadership team, inspired by your vision, has worked enthusiastically to ensure that ML has a very high profile and is now embedded across the learning plans for all year groups, including nursery and reception classes.
- Commitment with regard to staffing, time and other resources has been evident. A clear rationale has been developed for delivering French with good attention to ensuring that the model is sustainable.
- Responsibilities have been designated effectively through the shared role for ML curriculum coordination by two subject specialists. Both colleagues provide excellent support for class teachers and work collaboratively with one another in order to develop resources and schemes of work, as well as undertaking regular monitoring and evaluation of provision.
- An ongoing commitment to provide professional development enables all staff to deliver ML effectively. The leadership team has actively sought support from other agencies, partners and subject experts in order to develop skills and provision.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- developing strategies to minimise the use of English and increase the use of the language being studied
- providing challenge more consistently for the more able pupils
- continuing to develop and disseminate good practice with colleagues.

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

Jackie Hill
Additional Inspector