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Mrs J Dawson
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Dawson

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 19 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 five lessons.

The overall effectiveness of ML is good.

Achievement in ML

Achievement in ML is good.

- Achievement is good throughout the school. Pupils make good progress in their language lessons and their attainment is above average overall. The school has made excellent progress in implementing the entitlement to learn a foreign language.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy their French lessons and can give reasons for learning a foreign language. They listen well to their teachers and speak confidently. However, their pronunciation is sometimes an impediment to communication.
- Listening skills are well developed and pupils have access to a wide range of books in the foreign language. Pupils' writing skills are particularly accomplished and they apply grammatical rules effectively. By the time

they reach Year 6, pupils can write creatively, accurately and at length in the foreign language.

Quality of teaching in ML

The quality of teaching in ML is good, with some elements of outstanding practice.

- Teachers demonstrate considerable enthusiasm and passion for learning languages and they communicate this highly effectively to pupils. A palpable sense of fun is evident in lessons, and a wide range of sometimes ingenious activities engages and enthuses all pupils. For example, in one lesson, pupils were encouraged to speak French to their puppets, which they clearly enjoyed immensely.
- 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 develop pupils' speaking skills by encouraging the use of the target language as the normal means of communication. In addition, teachers do not always provide pupils with a good model of pronunciation for them to imitate.
- Teachers use information and communication technology effectively in lessons, for example to help pupils acquire new vocabulary. Other resources are also used highly effectively to motivate pupils. For example, in one outstanding lesson, pupils clearly had great fun singing along and dancing to a French song. The teacher asked them if they could identify in the song French words for sports and hobbies; they then demonstrated their comprehension by miming appropriate actions.
- Support from learning assistants is highly effective because they also demonstrate enthusiasm for the subject. This ensures that all pupils, of whatever ability, can participate in and enjoy language lessons.
- Teachers design lessons that are very accurately pitched at the needs and abilities of all pupils. They deftly adjust their teaching so that all pupils receive appropriate support and challenge. Assessment is conducted by classroom teachers in all four skills and detailed records are kept of pupils' progress. However, procedures for moderation and standardisation of assessment 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 balanced, encouraging progression across all skills.
- Special events showcase languages, such as the European Languages Day, when pupils enjoy a range of activities such as using foreign currency and eating foreign foods. This helps to enhance their awareness of other cultures.
- Pupils are aware that they can use the internet and reference books to learn more about France. However, pupils have a very limited

understanding of French culture, given their stage of development. The recent establishment of a link with a French primary school is now providing pupils with the opportunity to communicate by email with their peers in France.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in ML

The effectiveness of leadership and management in ML is good.

- Leadership at all levels shows a commitment to the promotion of language learning. The school believes strongly that the learning of a language can improve pupils' transferable skills, such as literacy, as well as broadening their horizons.
- Teachers express confidence in the leadership of the subject and a shared sense of purpose is in place across the school. Opportunities are sometimes missed to promote language learning through displays or signage around the school.
- Procedures for rigorous monitoring and evaluation are thoroughly embedded. Plans for the further development of the subject are sharply focused on raising achievement for all pupils.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- improving pupils' speaking skills by developing and embedding strategies to encourage the use of the target language as the routine means of communication in the classroom
- establishing more formal procedures for the assessment and accreditation of 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