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Mrs L Eaton  
Headteacher  
High Ash Church of England Combined School  
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Dear Mrs Eaton

**Ofsted 2012–13 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 14 June 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 three lessons.

The overall effectiveness of ML is good.

**Achievement in ML**

Achievement in ML is good.

- The majority of pupils are on track to achieve or exceed their challenging targets at the end of Key Stage 2. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs receive effective support to secure positive outcomes.
- Pupils speak with much enthusiasm about their French lessons and show great concentration in the classroom. They make a good effort to speak French accurately and with good pronunciation, but this is sometimes hindered because accurate pronunciation is not always modelled correctly by teachers. Pupils can apply grammatical rules to new situations when using known vocabulary and have a good understanding of the concept of gender and number.

- Older pupils are able to write longer sentences in French and these pupils can successfully identify key words when listening to longer extracts of the spoken language.
- Pupils are very much aware of the advantages of speaking French and many have a good knowledge of the cultures of countries where French is spoken. Older pupils are able to identify employment opportunities for which speaking a ML is highly advantageous.

### **Quality of teaching in ML**

The quality of teaching in ML is good.

- Despite all teachers being non-specialists, they convey their enthusiasm for French through their good-quality teaching which secures pupils' engagement and positive attitudes towards the subject. Teachers incorporate a wide range of appropriate activities when planning for learning and demonstrate a good awareness of the needs of different groups of pupils. Teachers provide work which challenges more-able pupils and which supports less-able pupils in making gains in their learning. Occasionally teachers make mistakes when teaching grammar. However, this does not affect pupils' ability to communicate well in the ML.
- Good use is made of resources including information and communication technology (ICT), songs and short stories. Additional adults in the classroom are well deployed to support pupils with their learning.
- Marking is regular and teachers record pupils' progress in all four skills systematically as they move through the school. Although teachers write positive comments in pupils' books, they do not offer clear guidance as to how pupils might improve on the quality of their work

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

The quality of the curriculum in ML is good.

- Pupils are taught French for approximately 60 minutes per week within a creative curriculum, which they say they really enjoy. Good links have been made with other curricular themes including the Second World War, space exploration and animals and their habitat.
- Schemes of work are clear and allow for progression as pupils move through the school. Good opportunities are provided for using ICT and for assessing pupils' progress.
- Pupils can take part in many activities which develop their understanding of French language and culture. They have celebrated the European Day of Languages and are looking forward to a French Day in July where they will experience a French breakfast, meet with professional French footballers who play for MK Dons, attend French art appreciation sessions and take part in French playground activities.

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management in ML is good.

- Senior leaders have demonstrated their commitment to the subject by financing a course for the subject leader, in which she spent time abroad to develop her French-teaching skills. All class teachers have also attended five after-school training sessions to develop their skills in teaching French.
- Rigorous systems are in place for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the subject. These include lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and a pupil focus group. Self-evaluation processes and improvement planning systems are well managed. A member of the governing body also monitors the provision regularly.

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

- increasing the use of French by teachers in the classroom as they grow in confidence so as to improve the quality of pupils' pronunciation
- ensuring that grammatical components in lessons are always taught accurately
- developing teachers' marking so that it offers clear guidance to pupils as to how they can improve the quality of their work.

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

**John Daniell**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**