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Mrs J Meyer  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Meyer

**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 27 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 two lessons.

The overall effectiveness of ML is good.

**Achievement in ML**

Achievement in ML is good.

- Pupils are enthusiastic about learning French and develop good pronunciation and intonation as they move through the school. They work hard in lessons and understand many reasons why it is important to study languages.
- Pupils enjoy the opportunities to work in pairs and groups, moving around being creative with language and working independently or with others.
- Writing is developed as they move through the school and pupils can copy accurately in the early stages and then add the ability to write creatively. For example, pupils in Year 6 enthusiastically engage in the imaginative and highly useful transition project where they create their own fables.

- Their knowledge of the culture of France is limited and pupils reported that they would appreciate more opportunities to become familiar with the countries where French is spoken. The internet is underused to support this aspect of pupils' achievement.

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

The quality of teaching in ML is good.

- All teachers are committed to and enthusiastic about teaching French. They provide pupils with a good range of activities in lessons, supported by very well-organised and helpful resources. They make good use of recordings of native speakers to ensure that pupils have accurate models to emulate.
- Teachers' are developing their subject knowledge which varies, but is at least satisfactory. They benefit from a good range of professional development opportunities. Where they are less sure of their own level of spoken French, they tend to use too much English to manage activities. However, this does not have a negative impact on the development of listening, because of the good use made of a range of listening resources and story telling.
- Teachers place a strong emphasis on the teaching of phonics, but pupils reported that they would appreciate more written and visual support to help them remember the new language. Those who take part in the vocabulary challenges set for homework enjoy the activities, but not all children participate.

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

The quality of the curriculum in ML is good.

- The curriculum is well informed by current initiatives in modern languages and includes opportunities for learning more than one language through links with a local secondary school.
- The curriculum develops all four skills and starts with appropriate early work in Key Stage 1. Class teachers incorporate aspects of language learning across other subjects.
- Schemes of work are carefully adjusted to build upon prior learning including the transition between primary and secondary education.
- A weaker aspect of the curriculum is the lack of contact with native speakers or use of technology to bring the culture into the classroom. The learning environment does not provide many opportunities to strengthen pupils' inter-cultural understanding.

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management in ML is good.

- The subject leader has a very well-developed understanding of effective ML teaching. She has successfully developed the capacity of class teachers, supported by a visiting teacher from a local secondary school, to deliver French themselves with growing confidence and success.
- Parents and carers are informed in reports of their children's progress and have opportunities to join in with the whole-school French days that take place every few years.
- Monitoring of the subject is not a regular part of whole-school self-evaluation, but you recognise that this will need to change as the subject grows. The subject-development plan is currently being revised.

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

- expanding opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of the culture of Francophone countries
- creating opportunities for the subject leader to observe class teachers delivering French in order to help them improve their practice further.

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**