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Mr Mark Clutterbuck
Coombe Hill Junior School
Coombe Lane West
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Dear Mr Clutterbuck

Subject inspection of Coombe Hill Junior School

Following my visit to your school on 17 January 2020, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. The findings do not change the overall effectiveness judgement of outstanding from the last section 5 inspection.

This inspection was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for a no formal designation inspection of schools. The inspection was carried out to enable Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to better understand the quality of education in specific subjects provided by outstanding primary schools.

Main findings

Leaders consider modern foreign languages an important part of the school curriculum. All pupils have a timetabled lesson in French each week with a specialist teacher. Leaders set aside sufficient time to cover the curriculum and ensure that all pupils have equal access to language lessons. The specialist teacher has expertise in languages and delivers the curriculum as set out in detailed plans. Leaders monitor the quality of language provision through lesson observations and book looks. From this they know the key strengths and areas for improvement.

Leaders want their pupils to have a broad and enjoyable experience of French that will lay the foundations for future language learning. Lessons are carefully planned to motivate and maintain pupils' interest through various activities, games and high-quality resources. Pupils like their lessons and can see the value of learning a language. Pupils learn about French culture through lessons on different traditions

and celebrations. Year 6 pupils also have the opportunity to attend a workshop and watch a French film at the British Film Institute.

The curriculum is taught through different topics which are completed in a logical order. These topics focus on key vocabulary. Pupils revisit and extend their vocabulary as they progress through the school. For example, they build up a bank of words for food items through different topics in Years 3 to 5, such as shopping for food and ordering snacks. Pupils get to practise what they know in the annual French café which is run by Year 6 pupils. Pupils have strong recall of familiar words that have been reinforced over time.

Pupils can form simple sentences in French but they struggle to do this without support. This is because the curriculum does not have a sufficient focus on the basic components of French grammar. This includes subject pronouns, articles, gender and verbs. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 cannot use high-frequency verb forms, for example. Their work shows coverage of this, but pupils do not understand the concept. This limits their progress in languages as they cannot apply the vocabulary they know to form sentences independently.

The curriculum does not develop pupils' writing as effectively as it should. Pupils are often limited to writing short sentences, or replacing a single word in a sentence. Older pupils can write a short paragraph but only by listing basic sentences that they have rehearsed in previous years. They do not use increasingly complex sentences or produce simple sentences independently. Native French speakers are encouraged to extend their writing, to include adjectives for example, but expectations of these pupils are not high enough.

Pupils have many opportunities to listen to and engage in the spoken language. They know the routines of pair work in French lessons, and happily participate in role plays and presentations. Pupils often listen to longer conversations when they are familiar with specific vocabulary. Staff model correct pronunciation and explain sound-spelling links. Pupils' pronunciation is generally very accurate as a result.

Evidence

I met with the headteacher, the specialist teacher for French and the deputy headteacher. I visited language lessons in Year 5 and Year 3. I met with three groups of pupils from Years 3, 5 and 6 to discuss their learning in French. I reviewed a sample of pupils' languages work from all year groups. I also looked at medium-term and long-term curriculum plans for French and the subject action plan.

Context

The school is an above average-sized school. There are currently 420 pupils on roll. More than half of the pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. The number of

pupils included in the register of special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average. The proportion of pupils with education, health and care plans is above average, as is those who speak English as an additional language. A below average number of pupils are entitled to free school meals. The school is fully staffed.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Kingston upon Thames. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jude Wilson
Her Majesty's Inspector