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Mr M Peaker  
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Dear Mr Peaker

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Modern languages

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation during my visit on 28 September to look at work in modern languages. I extend my thanks to your pupils and staff at Stanley School of Technology.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the subject, the visit had a particular focus on implementing languages entitlement.

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. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included: interviews with staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, and observation of one lesson.

The overall effectiveness of modern languages was judged to be satisfactory.

Achievement and standards

Achievement is satisfactory.

- Most pupils in Year 6 make satisfactory progress in lessons but the lower attainers struggle to understand the work.
- Pupils' achievement is limited by weaknesses in the way the subject is organised in the curriculum. Pupils are, for example, following a

beginners' course in Spanish, although they studied this language for some time last year.

- Pupils speak Spanish with good pronunciation. They can accurately carry out a short conversation introducing themselves to a stranger.
- Pupils enjoy the subject and have a good understanding of the benefits of learning different languages.

### Quality of teaching and learning of modern languages

Teaching and learning are satisfactory.

- None of the school's staff feels competent in modern languages so the school relies on a specialist from its partner secondary school to plan and teach the subject.
- The strengths of the observed lesson were the teacher's subject knowledge, the lively way that new work was presented, the high expectations, the praise and encouragement that pupils received, and the ingenious techniques that pupils were taught to help them memorise the vocabulary.
- In the lesson, there was insufficient support for the lower attaining pupils, who found the work too difficult.
- The subject is not reflected in classroom display, so pupils have no reference to it between their weekly lessons.
- Pupils' progress is not assessed or recorded.

### Quality of curriculum

The curriculum for modern languages is inadequate.

- The way the subject is organised on the timetable makes it difficult for pupils to make rapid progress. The single weekly lesson is too long for some pupils to absorb and retain all they have been taught. There is no opportunity for pupils or teachers to reinforce the learning during the week as the school's own teachers do not contribute to the teaching of the subject. After beginning their study of French and Spanish in Year 5, pupils lose touch with each language for a long period, while they study the alternative language for half a year. Year 5 pupils have had to suspend their study for a year because the school could not provide a teacher for them.
- The school has not developed its own scheme of work establishing what is to be taught, and when.

### Leadership and management of modern languages

While the school is, for understandable reasons, concentrating on the need to improve pupils' performance in the core subjects, the leadership and management of modern languages are inadequate.

- It is not clear who is responsible for the leadership and management of the subject.
- The current model for providing modern languages is unsustainable. It relies too heavily on the involvement of staff from the partner secondary school, and this imposes significant constraints on the way the curriculum for the subject is organised.
- The arrangements for teaching modern languages are not formally monitored or evaluated. There was no evaluation of their impact last year or their value for money, and no improvements have been planned for this year.
- Staff in the school and teachers from the partner secondary school have not had professional development for teaching primary languages.

### Implementing languages entitlement

- The school's plan to introduce languages entitlement is rudimentary. Once the current interim arrangements have ended, the plan does not specify how the subject will be organised or how staff will be trained.

### Inclusion

All pupils in Year 6 study modern languages. There is no discernible difference in the achievement of boys and girls.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- monitoring and evaluating the teaching of the subject
- planning a sustainable model to provide all pupils in Key Stage 2 with an entitlement to modern languages
- preparing a scheme of work that will meet the challenges of teaching the subject to mixed age groups
- arranging for staff to receive training and support.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop modern languages in the school.

As I explained in my previous letter, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be published on Ofsted's website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Derek Neil  
Her Majesty's Inspector