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Mrs A Gibb
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Gibb

Ofsted survey inspection programme – modern languages

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and for the help of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 2 May to look at work in modern languages.

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, analysis of pupils' work and observation of four lessons.

The overall effectiveness of languages was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in French are good.

- Pupils' attainment is what might be expected, given the short time they have been learning French. They make good progress in the lessons and achieve well.
- Pupils have a good stock of vocabulary. In Year 2, for example, they know a wide range of colours. Older pupils can put together words from different topics to create their own sentences; for example, they

can combine their knowledge of the weather with the names of countries to produce a weather report.

- They can carry out simple exchanges, such as introducing themselves, and use their knowledge of numbers to do simple calculations.
- Their pronunciation is mostly accurate, though they make errors with words that resemble their English equivalents because they do not know basic phonic rules in French.
- Older pupils can read aloud accurately and with understanding.
- Pupils enjoy the subject and have some ideas about why it is important for them to learn a language.

Quality of teaching and learning in languages

Teaching and learning are good.

- Lessons are planned very well and teachers manage their classes efficiently. Therefore, the lessons run smoothly.
- Teachers make sure that the work is well matched to the full range of ability in their class.
- Lessons have a good structure. They begin with recapitulation of what has already been learned, include a variety of interesting activities that involve and enthuse the pupils, and end with an imaginative plenary which gives the pupils an opportunity to perform in French and the teacher a chance to assess the progress they have made.
- Teachers have high expectations of what the pupils can learn. Occasionally this results in their being asked to carry out a task before they have had sufficient practice with the new material they have been taught.
- In some lessons too little French is spoken by the teacher or the pupils.
- In the best lessons the teacher requires pupils to think about the language in order to solve a problem; and to combine vocabulary from earlier topics to reinforce pupils' prior learning and to extend their skills.
- Pupils are interested and motivated. They concentrate well and are keen to answer the teacher's questions. They carry out pair and group work responsibly. Consequently, they make good progress in class.
- Pupils' work in class is closely monitored. In particular, their pronunciation errors are corrected swiftly and effectively. However, the school does not keep records of pupils' progress in the subject.

Quality of curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory.

- The time allocated to French is adequate, although it is reduced in Year 6 so pupils can spend more time preparing for their national tests.

- A voluntary helper who is a native speaker provides valuable support for teachers whose subject knowledge is insecure. This enables each class to learn French with their class teacher.
- The use of special events and assemblies to further pupils' learning is very effective. Pupils, for instance, recall with excitement the varied experiences they enjoyed during last year's "French day."
- The school has not developed its own scheme of work to detail what is to be learned by each year group. It has carried out very little planning with its partner secondary schools to prepare pupils for their transfer to Key Stage 3.

Leadership and management of languages

The leadership and management of the subject are good.

- The school's policy for languages is well written and includes a suitable rationale and objectives for introducing it into the curriculum.
- Staff are committed to ensuring that this recent initiative is of a high quality. It is supported by dedicated funding, a suitable action plan, and recognition that further extensive staff development is required.
- Managers have a very good understanding of the subject's strengths and areas for development because of the thorough way its introduction has been monitored.

Implementing languages entitlement

The school has made good progress with this.

- All pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 learn French; this has been achieved in a very short time.
- Effective leadership and management along with a commitment to staff development mean that the school is well placed to deliver the statutory languages entitlement by 2010.

Inclusion

- All pupils learn French. There is no discernible difference in the achievement of boys and girls, or of different ability groups.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- preparing a detailed scheme of work for each year group
- ensuring that all staff are well trained to teach the subject
- planning with partner secondary schools so that pupils make a smooth transfer to Key Stage 3.

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

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

Yours sincerely

Derek Neil
Her Majesty's Inspector