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Mrs J Andrews  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Andrews

Ofsted survey inspection programme – modern languages

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 28 September 2007 to look at work in modern languages (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. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term.

Schools are expected to provide an entitlement for all pupils in Key Stage 2 to learn a modern language by 2010. As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the subject, the visit had a particular focus on the progress the school is making towards entitlement.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included: interviews with staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, and observation of short parts of seven lessons and a play-time activity.

#### Achievement and standards

French is being introduced this year in all year groups, and so it is too early to be able to judge standards. Progress made by the pupils in this short period of time is at least satisfactory.

- Pupils listen well and respond to the teacher's instructions in French, for example when playing physical response games.
- They recall words from previous sessions well.
- They try hard to copy their teacher's pronunciation.

- They are keen to speak, usually individual words, but some older pupils hold short conversations in French, developing social as well as language skills.
- Pupils are proud to say words in their home or heritage languages.
- They are keen to talk about how many languages are spoken in their school and view languages as a very useful skill to develop.
- Importantly, pupils are very excited about their current language-learning and are keen to learn more.

#### Quality of teaching and learning in ML

- All teachers in the school are involved in introducing French to their own classes, although most are at an early stage of learning, or revising, French. Teaching assistants are also involved in the programme and some have already undertaken training.
- Staff know their pupils well and are keen for them all to succeed in French, with a clear focus on raising their self-esteem.
- Teachers teach the short activities they have learnt at their weekly training sessions. This work is often experimental, but greatly enthuses pupils – and teachers! Teachers plan lively activities, with lots of movement involved, which keeps pupils keen and engaged. Pupils particularly enjoy learning through songs and games.
- Teachers try hard to use as much French as possible in sessions.
- Where teachers are unsure of how to pronounce words themselves, they are nevertheless aware of the need for pupils to get correct models: some use recordings and software to help pupils 'get it right'.
- In two classes, teachers used the interactive-whiteboard very successfully to support pupils' learning.
- Teachers develop pupils' social skills and intercultural understanding very effectively, as well as their language skills.
- Teachers monitor individual pupils' learning and give lots of praise, but it is 'too early days' for formal assessment in languages.

#### Quality of curriculum

- The school is offering all pupils, from Nursery to Year 6, at least one weekly opportunity to learn French.
- The time spent is currently variable across classes, but there are short daily sessions in some classes and these are increasing as teachers become more confident.
- There is no formal scheme of work in place, but the school has purchased software and a course book, to support the development of a pilot scheme for this year. This will then be further refined next year in preparation for 2009/10. The school also has copies of the new QCA scheme and *The Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages* to support further planning.
- In some classes pupils are also learning to count and say basic words and phrases in languages other than French, for example German and

Japanese. They are gaining a good understanding of the multilingual world.

### Leadership and management of ML

You are currently coordinating the initiative, as staffing difficulties last school year included the absence of the specialists previously designated to head up languages.

- There is a clear rationale for the introduction of languages into the school.
- All staff have been involved in the introduction of French, and the majority of permanent teachers are currently attending regular weekly twilight training sessions held by the local authority.
- Staff also attend periodic professional development sessions held in the school by the primary languages consultant who leads the initiative for the local authority.
- These training opportunities began last year and school staff have responded very positively.
- Appropriate resources have been purchased, including assessment schemes for future development.
- A draft policy and development plan are to be submitted to the governing body at the first meeting this term.

### Implementing languages entitlement

- Progress towards the implementation of languages entitlement is satisfactory.
- Until this current year, the school has not been in a position to introduce a language systematically to all classes, but language-learning is now developing apace.
- The school has made very good use of all external support available, and is now in a strong position to develop provision over the next two years.

### Inclusion

- This is a strength.
- All pupils are involved in learning French, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities.
- Similarly all staff are involved, including teaching assistants, and there is a collective determination to make the initiative successful.
- Pupils' home languages and culture are celebrated in this multilingual school, and parents are being increasingly involved in supporting these developments.
- Both boys and girls are keen to learn languages, including each other's!

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- developing a scheme of work, identifying key learning outcomes for each year group
- continuing to develop staff expertise in both the French language and in how to teach the language
- in the course of the year, identifying a co-ordinator to lead the subject in its next phase of development.

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

Anne Feltham  
Her Majesty's Inspector