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Mrs J Henley  
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Dear Mrs Henley

Ofsted survey inspection programme – modern languages

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and those of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 04 March 2008 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 implementing languages entitlement.

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

Context

Pupils in two year groups learn a language. French has been taught to pupils in Year 3 since 2006, and to pupils in Year 4 since 2007. By September 2009, all pupils in Years 3 to 6 will be learning French. Training has been well planned to ensure teachers are well supported to deliver ML throughout the school.

## Achievement and standards

- From their starting points, pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall.
- They achieve well in speaking and listening because the main focus in French is on the Oracy strand of the *Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages*. Pupils listen attentively and respond to familiar spoken words, phrases and sentences. Their pronunciation and intonation are good because teachers model these carefully and use recordings of native speakers to support pupils' learning.
- Pupils have some introduction to reading and write some single words in French. However, this is not a regular feature of ML teaching and there is no explicit teaching of reading and writing. As a result, progress in the Literacy strand of the Key Stage 2 Framework is limited.
- Pupils' knowledge and understanding of heritage and home languages is good because staff work hard to promote respect for the cultural diversity of the school. Pupils enjoyed the recent Languages Day during which they learned short phrases in a wide variety of languages spoken by members of the school community, including Italian, Mandarin, Norwegian, Welsh, Japanese and Portuguese. Each week, all pupils learn and practise a greeting word in a new language. As a result they appreciate the diversity of languages spoken in the school, racial harmony is promoted well and intercultural understanding is good.
- Teachers make some good references to basic grammatical similarities between French and English. For example, pupils in Year 4 compared the order of adjectives and nouns in French and English sentences.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning languages are positive. Boys and girls are equally well motivated and they are very keen to take an active part in lessons.
- Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the importance of learning ML for their future lives and are enthusiastic to continue language learning in secondary school.
- Pupils who find literacy and numeracy difficult achieve as much as they can. Pupils who already speak other languages make good progress. However, planning does not always ensure that more able pupils are consistently challenged.

## Quality of teaching and learning in ML

- Teachers' subject knowledge is satisfactory and sometimes good. Teachers combine a satisfactory knowledge of ML teaching methodology with a good range of strategies to ensure pupils take an active part in their learning. Pupils appreciate the lively activities teachers plan for them. Pupils say learning French is fun and they speak particularly positively about singing French songs.
- Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is used well by teachers to enliven teaching and to model good pronunciation using sound recordings.

- Academic guidance in ML is limited. Pupils do not have targets for ML and beyond praise for their efforts in lessons, they receive no feedback. As a result, pupils are unaware of their strengths and weaknesses and are not clear what they need to do to improve their work. Systems to check up on how well pupils are doing are not yet in place to support teachers in planning the next steps in pupils' learning, especially for more able pupils.

### Quality of curriculum

- The school is working towards an effective model of delivery of languages in Key Stage 2. The rationale is to raise awareness of and appreciation for languages and to prepare children for their future lives in a diverse and multicultural community.
- The school aims to foster a curiosity for and interest in learning spoken languages and enrich pupils' learning experiences through learning ML.
- Teaching methods are firmly rooted in the primary curriculum. They focus on active, enjoyable learning using physical response, games, songs and role play.
- Teachers make good use of websites and the computer resources which are part of the course they are using, as well as video clips showing pupils what life is like in countries where French is spoken.
- The class teachers teach the foreign language and one of them is the subject coordinator.
- Provision is 60 minutes per week. Class teachers reinforce learning informally during the week. For example, pupils use French when the teacher is taking the register and in Year 4 French is used for the warm up at the start of PE lessons.
- The school is following the scheme of work for speaking and listening suggested by the course they have purchased. This covers a good range of topics. Pupils use prior language as they progress through the scheme. For example, pupils in Year 4 learning classroom objects were using their previous knowledge of colours and numbers to describe the contents of their pencil case. However, opportunities for reading and writing in ML are very limited.

### Leadership and management of ML

- Leadership and management of ML are satisfactory. Leaders have established a clear rationale for ML and a shared vision amongst the staff. As a result, pupils' achievement is satisfactory.
- The introduction of primary languages is identified in the School Improvement Plan, including up-skilling teachers, appointing a permanent ML coordinator and purchasing appropriate resources, investigating the new QCA Scheme of Work and introducing pupil self assessment. However, teacher assessment and addressing the Literacy strand of the Key Stage 2 are not identified as priorities.

- Teachers have good access to training to develop their ML teaching strategies and their knowledge of the language being taught. This is through Local Authority run twilight sessions, with some additional support from the teacher who has had primary modern foreign languages initial teacher training. Teachers are enthusiastic to take up further training opportunities.
- Senior leaders are not yet involved in formally monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in order to bring about further improvements.

### Implementing languages entitlement

- Progress towards implementing languages entitlement is satisfactory.

### Inclusion

- All pupils in Years 3 and 4 are included in language learning.
- The school knows the pupils' linguistic backgrounds well and uses this to promote languages learning.
- Teachers select strategies for teaching ML including visual support, games and physical activities which ensure that all pupils are included well in lessons. As a result, pupils who find literacy and numeracy difficult achieve as much as they can.
- Pupils who already speak other languages make good progress.
- However, planning does not always ensure that more able pupils are consistently challenged.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- increasing opportunities for pupils to develop their ML reading and writing skills
- ensuring that assessment systems are in place and used to plan the next steps in pupils' language learning and to help pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

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

Madeleine Gerard  
Additional Inspector