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Mr P Nolan  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Nolan

Ofsted survey inspection programme – modern languages

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and those of your staff and pupils, during the visit of myself and Michael McIlroy HMI on 03 June 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, analysis of pupils' work and observation of parts of three lessons.

Achievement and standards

- Pupils listen well and understand the simple French they are taught.
- They are reasonably confident in speaking but communication is sometimes hindered by weak pronunciation.
- Sound-spelling links are under-developed.
- Pupils' recall of previously learned language is not as strong as it could be.
- Older pupils can understand written words and phrases on worksheets such as colours, numbers and parts of the body but they have had little

practice reading simple stories and poems using cognates and clues to help them to deduce meaning.

- Older pupils copy-write well and fill in gaps in sentences; some can write simple sentences describing themselves.
- Year 6 pupils are developing some understanding of grammatical differences between French and English.
- Overall, Years 5 and 6 are making good progress given their starting points.
- Pupils are very well behaved in lessons. All pupils are very positive and enthusiastic about learning languages; this was shown by Year 6 who elected to continue with their French lessons in the lead-up to and the week of their SATs examinations.
- They know why it is important to learn languages; they can cite a range of employment where it could be useful and are aware that it should help them in their secondary and further education.
- Overall, learning languages contributes very well to their enjoyment of learning and their personal development and well being.

#### Quality of teaching and learning in ML

- Subject knowledge varies with the competence and confidence of the teaching staff. The main strength across Key Stage 2 is the way class teachers use primary methodology to teach French. Routines are well established.
- There is good use of different resources, including the interactive whiteboard in Years 5 and 6. Lessons include a variety of learning styles and activities, including pair and group work, and games, which maintain interest very well and which pupils find 'fun'. Making fruit kebabs was a good culmination to a lesson where pupils learned how to say which fruits they liked and ask for different ones. Learning to talk about their birthdays, another class was enthusiastically building up to having a birthday party and playing all the French games they had previously learned.
- There is display in classrooms and the hall which is used routinely by pupils and the concept of a 'French curtain' in Year 6 where display changes according to lesson needs is excellent.
- Planning is detailed to reach the objectives of lessons and includes both differentiation and ongoing assessment. Lesson observation confirms that this takes place. However, there is no formal assessment or recording of progress and pupils are unsure of the progress they are making.
- A key weakness for some groups is teachers' pronunciation, intonation, and knowledge of French. Although in some cases the teacher provides alternative models so that pupils hear a correct version; this is not always as successful as it could be because pupils end up 'yo-yoing' between correct and incorrect versions of words and phrases.

- Use of French to conduct parts of the lesson is not yet well established, so, for example, praise and instructions in French are not embedded in most lessons.
- In one lesson observed pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities were well supported and they responded eagerly.

### Quality of curriculum

- All pupils in Key Stage 2 started learning French in autumn 2007. This has been successful in Years 5 and 6 but less so in Years 3 and 4 where staff turbulence, confidence and the reduced time spent on learning the language have had an impact upon on outcomes.
- Pupils in Years 5 and 6 learn French for about an hour a week, either discretely or for 30 minutes during the week followed by small bursts at other times, for example during registration. This is a good allocation of time. In Years 3 and 4 the time spent is less and there are weeks when pupils do not always have a lesson so the continuity of learning is broken.
- Pupils in Key Stage 1 and the Foundation Stage also have small tasters of learning French and learning about different countries.
- There are currently insufficient teachers who feel competent and confident to teach French in Years 3 and 4; senior leadership has resolved Year 3's provision for next year.
- Provision is based on the QCA Key Stage 2 Framework with lessons planned to match the units of work. It meets the interests of pupils and is enhanced by language and cultural days which pupils spoke about enthusiastically. However, there is insufficient emphasis on how learning a new language can support pupils' literacy and language learning strategies.

### Leadership and management of ML

- You are very supportive of introducing languages to the primary curriculum and have made good efforts to do so this first year.
- The rationale for introducing French is well founded. Its development features in the school improvement plan under the heading 'developing a creative curriculum' and is expanded appropriately in the subject development plan.
- The languages policy is well-written but the monitoring and evaluation and governor involvement described are not yet in hand.
- The school is in touch with its main secondary school; the latter is aware of how Annesley is teaching French but there are no plans for progression to Key Stage 3 yet.
- Planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) time is used to bring in a teacher to teach French to class 6 which provides a good amount of time for learning French; however, it militates against the class teacher working in French with her class.

- So far, there has been little professional development in languages or attendance at local network meetings for teachers or the subject co-ordinator so far; it is intended that the co-ordinator will attend local authority training next term. The lack of training has not helped some teachers to boost their knowledge of the language and so pupils have sometimes learned the wrong words or are confused.

### Implementing languages entitlement

The school is implementing languages entitlement in Key Stage 2 satisfactorily and is on track to have it well-established by 2010.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- introducing monitoring and evaluation of provision and the recording and tracking of pupils' progress to ensure all pupils achieve well
- ensuring that there are regular opportunities for staff development in French
- introducing more everyday use of French into lessons, for example: by giving praise and instructions consistently in French; and at other times, for example: saying and writing the day and the date every day, giving test scores in French, practising saying what they had for lunch
- broadening pupils' opportunities for reading through, for example, stories, and for improving their literacy through learning French.

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

Pam Haezewindt  
Her Majesty's Inspector