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Mrs L Lilico
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Lilico

Ofsted survey inspection programme – implementing languages entitlement in primary schools

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and for the help of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 14 July to look at work in modern languages.

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 progress towards implementing languages entitlement.

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

Achievement and standards

- Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have covered a suitable range of topics and have learned a lot of useful vocabulary. Their retention of the vocabulary varies; the learning is more secure in Year 6 than in Year 5.
- Pupils speak French well. Their pronunciation is at least satisfactory and in some classes good.

- With guidance from the teacher they can combine different words and phrases to build their own simple sentences.
- When writing, they copy words and phrases accurately and neatly. They can use a framework to write about a familiar topic. Year 5 pupils, for example, can describe their daily routine by combining familiar phrases with a small number of commonly used connectives.
- There is no discernible difference in the achievement of boys and girls, though boys tend to be more confident and willing to take part in oral work.
- The current rate of progress through the units of the scheme is too slow; the school has taken steps to accelerate this rate in future.
- All pupils have very positive attitudes to French. All those interviewed during the visit said they enjoyed the subject and many counted it among their favourites.
- They are developing important transferable skills. They work effectively in collaboration and in competition with others. Their confidence is high and they are not afraid to 'have a go' with the language.
- They have a basic knowledge of French culture and understanding of the value of learning a language.

Quality of teaching and learning in modern languages

- Lessons are well planned. They have clear and suitable learning objectives, a coherent structure, and an appropriate emphasis on each of the four skills.
- Lessons have a good variety of interesting activities. Pupils particularly enjoy playing games and, when the teacher provides the opportunity, using information and communications technology to consolidate their learning.
- Working relationships are very good. Teachers use praise and encouragement very well to build pupils' self confidence and develop positive attitudes to the subject.
- The very best teaching is marked by the teacher's ability to spot and correct pupils' errors quickly and sensitively; as well as the systematic recycling of prior learning to support the new learning in the lesson.
- Pupils are taught effectively how to ask as well as to answer questions, and how to build up their own sentences using words and phrases they know.
- The links between sounds and spellings are taught well.
- Work, on the whole, is matched accurately to pupils' ability, although sometimes pupils feel they spend too long on the same limited range of vocabulary.
- Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are fully included in lessons: they are encouraged to participate and are well supported.
- The staff have at least adequate knowledge of French for the level they are teaching. However, teachers and pupils rarely use the language for conducting classroom business.

- The school has made good headway with developing assessment arrangements. All pupils assess their own progress at the end of each unit. Additionally, a summative assessment in three of the four skills, based on a restricted range of vocabulary, has been devised. This has been trialled on the current Year 5, moderated within the cluster of schools and evaluated in terms of pupils' response. Although the results have not yet been entered into the school's tracking system to enable staff to analyse pupils' progress, this represents a considerable achievement.

Quality of curriculum

- The time allocated for the subject is adequate. There is scope for additional opportunities during the week though these are not planned systematically and, as a result, do not occur often enough.
- The school provides a good range of enrichment activities, which pupils clearly enjoy. These include presentations in assembly and creative work by gifted and talented pupils at the city learning centre.
- The subject content is based on a nationally recognised scheme. It provides a strong framework for teachers to plan for pupils' progress. It is mapped against the expectations of the Key Stage 2 framework and supported by an extensive range of suggested activities and resources.
- The school has not yet customised the scheme of work to suit its own context. The rate of progress through the units is still being worked out. Different year groups and different classes within a year group do not all receive a consistent diet. Too little is planned to develop pupils' intercultural understanding.

Leadership and management of modern languages

- The subject leader and the school's leadership team provide clear direction for the subject. The school has adopted an aspirational policy, prepared with local authority support.
- The subject has developed well in recent years because of staff's commitment and well conceived annual action plans.
- An audit of staff's skills usefully pinpoints where additional training has been needed; the audit has not been updated so that more immediate training needs can be identified.
- Staff have attended a variety of relevant professional development including substantial opportunities to observe a specialist teaching their classes. They also have access to suitable support in the school, for example to help them with pronunciation.
- School managers have not begun to monitor the teaching and evaluate the quality of provision but have plans to do so next term.
- The school could do more with pupils who speak languages other than English to celebrate their achievement and to enhance all pupils'

appreciation of the importance of learning languages. At present, pupils' awareness of the multilingualism in the school is quite limited.

Implementing languages entitlement

- The school has made good progress in implementing pupils' entitlement to learn a modern language. All pupils learn French in Key Stage 2 and the subject has a strong foothold in Key Stage 1.
- The introduction of the subject has been well planned over a number of years with the clear goal of having the model completely ready for 2010.
- The development has entailed close attention to all of the essential areas to ensure success: extensive staff training, the acquisition of resources, the construction of effective schemes of work and assessment systems, and close liaison with the partner secondary school.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- developing a scheme of work that closely reflects what the school wants to achieve in modern languages
- using French more in lessons for routine classroom business
- formally monitoring and evaluating the subject in order to identify priorities for improvement.

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