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Mrs W Whelan  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Whelan

Ofsted survey inspection programme – modern languages.

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and those of your staff and students, during my visit on 14-15 October 2008 to look at work in modern languages (ML).

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the subject, the visit had a particular focus on how information and communication technology (ICT) is being used by teachers and students to improve language learning. It also looked at where you are in reaching the benchmarks for provision in Key Stage 4.

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 students, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of students' work and observation of six lessons.

The overall effectiveness of ML was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

Achievement is good; standards are above average.

- By the end of Key Stage 3 in 2008 Year 9 students had achieved standards above national expectations in French and had improved on results in 2007. In Panjabi and Urdu these standards well above.

- The numbers of students achieving a good grade in GCSE in French also improved to above the national average and the small number taking Panjabi achieved 100% A\*-C grades, again above the national average. Students who took Urdu achieved well, gaining 72% A\*-C.
- The provision of A level is shared with Littleover Community College. Five students took French at Advanced level and achieved results in line with the national average and four took Panjabi achieving above national average results.
- Progress in lessons was good overall and scrutiny of books showed that students often progress at a very fast pace, for example: in Panjabi from Year 8 to Year 9.
- Good progress was partly because learning in lessons observed was mostly good and students had opportunities to take risks.
- Students in most lessons spoke with some accuracy.
- They begin to write in paragraphs from early on in their learning and many can write at some length by Year 9.
- Students say they enjoy languages because 'there is always something new'. Older students have a good understanding of why they are useful and both Key Stage 4 and 5 students spoke articulately about why they had chosen the language they are studying. Younger students were less certain of their importance. Post 16 students had clearly been inspired by their previous experience at Derby Moor.
- The large majority of students behave very well and have good attitudes towards learning a language. Overall, languages contribute well to students' personal development and well being.

### Quality of teaching and learning in ML

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

- Planning is detailed and suitably matched to need, sometimes very ably so. For example, a Year 9 Panjabi lesson very carefully ensured that all students could reach their potential.
- There is a good variety of activities to achieve the learning outcomes planned.
- The approach to teaching and learning across languages is consistent.
- Much of the teaching is in the target languages, providing good role models. Students show their understanding of instructions in their reactions but do not always respond in the target language.
- In lessons observed there were good examples of reading aloud, use of reference materials, self-assessment, and homework was linked well to the lesson to extend knowledge.
- In a Year 9 Urdu lesson a reading passage was used well as a stimulus to speaking about healthy eating.
- In a Year 7 French lesson students built on what they already knew to learn more about describing their families – the content was carefully sequenced and the teacher nudged all students into being able to ask about brothers and sisters and give simple answers.

- Students of Panjabi spoke about using authentic materials such as newspapers in lessons.
- Students' books are generally well-marked and show teachers have high expectations of their students.
- Key Stage 4 students are confident about how well they are doing and felt they had a good grasp of the GCSE grade criteria and could use it to help them improve their work. Key Stage 3 students less so: they know what their levels are but said they could not explain what that meant or how knowing them could help them improve their work. Teachers' comments, however, often helped them.
- Not all staff make the best use of display to support students' language development.

### Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory with some good features.

- Overall, there is a suitable time allocation for languages.
- There is a very good choice of languages available on the time-table for all three key stages – French, Urdu, Panjabi and German.
- High attaining students study German in Year 9 but only for one lesson a week. Nevertheless, a few take it through to GCSE.
- Students choose between Urdu and French whilst at primary school when the school writes to parents informing them of the choice. It is fully inclusive with no pre-requirements for either language. At the end of Year 7 students continue the one they are doing or they can choose to change to Panjabi. They then have three 60-minute periods and evidence shows that those who do make the change make rapid progress.
- There are currently no alternative courses or accreditation to GCSE.
- The school intends to review how the curriculum can be broadened for languages, including the possibility of offering Spanish and alternative accreditation.
- Gifted and talented students go to university for a day and can also work for the Young Leaders' Award for languages (associated with Sports College status) in order to work in primary schools.
- Enrichment and intercultural opportunities beyond the curriculum for all students for languages are not extensive and are predominantly Eurocentric. There is a French trip for Years 8-10 and a three-day trip to Paris for Year 12 students. The European Day for Languages was celebrated well this year. There is also a language focussed sports' challenge. In the past there have been other events.

### Leadership and management of ML

Leadership and management are good.

- The subject leader is well supported by departmental staff and the senior leadership team.
- Community and European languages work very well as a team.
- The development of languages appears appropriately in the whole school self-evaluation form (SEF) and the departmental SEF tackles key issues and evaluates provision and performance. The two are not related as sharply as they could be.
- The departmental development plan is appropriate.
- Assessment data and tracking are being used to identify students who need support or extra provision. It is not quite clear how this is being monitored and evaluated to improve individual students' progress.
- The subject leader has a good awareness of the new Secondary curriculum and work has already begun on reshaping schemes of work to link with this and whole-school developments will take it further.
- The school has a strong and continuing record of supporting the professional development and qualifications of their community languages teachers, with excellent results. Beyond this, the new examinations and the new Secondary curriculum are the main foci for continuing professional development (CPD).
- Resources are sufficient and there has recently been an increase in computers and interactive whiteboards. There are magazines and reference material in the library. However, students spoken to said they did not use them and they were not referred to in lessons.
- The subject leader has made contact with local feeder primary schools, with little response so far, and now intends to work with the local primary ML consultant through the strategic learning network (SLN) which has transfer and transition as its priority.

How close the school is to reaching the benchmarks for language take-up in Key Stage 4

- The school has 40% take-up in Year 11 and 25% in Year 10. One of its priorities is to increase take-up for 2009/10.
- It is looking to introduce Spanish in 2009/10. Two teachers can already offer it and another is learning this year, supported by the school.
- The school is also looking into early entry for GCSE, probably for Panjabi in the first instance, and into the application and implementation of Asset Languages.

How well is ICT used by teachers and students to improve language learning?

This is satisfactory.

- Access to ICT is satisfactory on a bookings basis.
- The ICT programmes which link to the new course books are installed on the school's network and are useful tools. For example, in a Year 8 French lesson students revised and broadened their knowledge

through a computer programme designed to help them with listening, reading and writing. They were engrossed, motivated, and, as they said when asked about using ICT in languages: 'we are able to work at our own pace'.

- There is a Panjabi word processor on the school network but none has so far been adopted for Urdu.
- Word processing is not used regularly to draft and redraft work to help students improve their accuracy, to assess their own progress, and to understand audience and purpose.
- Use of ICT for research purposes is limited.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- ensuring that Key Stage 3 students know the meaning of their levels of attainment and that this helps them to improve their work
- embedding more firmly the use of ICT for drafting and redrafting text to improve accuracy and for research purposes
- considering broadening the extra curricular provision for languages
- monitoring and evaluating the use of tracking data to improve individual students' chances of success.

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

Yours sincerely

Pam Haezewindt  
Her Majesty's Inspector