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Dear Miss Curtis

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 22 January 2009 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 three lessons.

Context

Since September 2008, all pupils in Years 3 to 6 learn French.

Achievement and standards

- From their starting points, pupils' achievement is good in listening, speaking, reading and writing.
- Their response to the activities they are given to do is very positive. For example, pupils in Years 3, 4 and 6 sang songs in French with

great enthusiasm. Boys and girls are equally well motivated. One pupil typically said, 'I think learning another language is great.'

- Work in books is consistently well presented and reflects pupils' pride in what they are doing.
- Pupils speak with confidence in French. For example, they enjoy answering simple greetings in the target language and some more able pupils in a Year 6 French lesson performed a short dialogue asking and answering questions on personal identity.
- Relationships between pupils and adults and among the pupils themselves are very positive. In lessons observed, pupils set to work as soon as they were given tasks to do and sustained their interest. They co-operated well together and shared resources very sensibly.
- Their intercultural understanding is satisfactory.

Quality of teaching and learning in ML

- Learning objectives are shared and pupils are given a good variety of tasks to do. Resources are used well to enliven teaching and learning including mini white boards, interactive white boards and computers.
- Teaching methods focus on active, enjoyable learning using games, songs, short video clips with cartoons and native speakers in French. Teachers make good use of a variety of online resources.
- All pupils are included in French lessons in Years 3 to 6. Although there is a range of ability in most classes, all groups of pupils are often expected to do similar work in the ML lessons. Pupils who find learning more difficult are well supported and as a result they make similar progress to their peers. It is more able pupils that are not always set suitably challenging tasks to do.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly and their efforts acknowledged. However, marking is not always used to make clear to pupils how they can improve their work. Pupils appreciate opportunities to assess for themselves how well they are making progress. However, information from marking and pupils' self assessments are not used consistently to plan appropriately challenging tasks for all pupils' needs.

Quality of curriculum

- A language specialist, known as the ML instructor, teaches the foreign language. The class teachers stay with the class during the ML lesson to support the teaching, to work with individual pupils who need help and to support small groups during independent tasks. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have one 30-minute lesson delivered by the ML instructor each week. In Years 5 and 6, pupils have one 45-minute lesson each week. The class teachers reinforce the new language with their class during the week.
- The strengths of this model lie in the combined strengths of the language skills of the ML instructor and the primary teaching skills of the class teachers. A further strength of the model is that class

teachers are aware of the new language learned each week and are able to go over this work during the week to support the learning.

- The school is developing a scheme of work, based on the Key Stage 2 scheme of work as well as the Key Stage 2 Framework. Oracy and Literacy are covered well. The development of intercultural understanding, knowledge about language and language learning strategies is satisfactory.

Leadership and management of ML

- Leaders have established a clear rationale for ML and a shared vision amongst the staff. As a result, pupils achieve well.
- Leaders have a good awareness of the schools strengths and areas for development. Priorities for development are identified in the school's development planning.
- The school has responded positively to local authority monitoring and action planning.
- Improvements in the quality of ML provision, in ML resources, in teachers' ML subject knowledge through professional development, in the ML curriculum and action to improve the quality of assessment in ML reflect the school's good self-evaluation.
- Assessment information does not yet support pupils' transition to secondary school

Implementing languages entitlement

Implementing entitlement is good.

- There is an effective model of delivery of languages in Key Stage 2 and a clear rationale for it.
- Teaching methods are firmly rooted in the primary curriculum and pupils achieve well.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- ensuring that ML assessment systems are used to plan the next steps in pupils' learning and to sharpen pupils' knowledge of what they need to do to improve
- increasing opportunities for pupils to develop their intercultural understanding, knowledge about language, and language learning strategies
- ensuring the transfer of assessment information to receiving secondary schools to support transition.

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