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Mrs S Devereux  
Headteacher  
Banks Road Primary School  
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Dear Mrs Devereux

Ofsted 2009-10 subject survey inspection programme: modern languages (ML)

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 19 October 2009 to look at work in 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 well the school is implementing entitlement in Key Stage 2.

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.

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 in primary languages

- The progress made by pupils in lessons is good overall.
- Pupils' listening and speaking skills are developing well. They can ask and answer a number of simple questions. Their pronunciation is satisfactory.
- Their writing skills are underdeveloped.
- Pupils' understanding of grammar is at an early stage of development.
- Learning languages makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development. Behaviour in lessons is good. They enjoy French and cited as reasons the songs, games and activities they take part in as well as the

opportunity to learn new vocabulary. Both boys and girls show positive attitudes towards language learning.

- Pupils' understanding of the usefulness of languages is satisfactory. They know it is useful for careers in teaching, when travelling abroad and that it aids communication between different people.
- Pupils' intercultural understanding is not as broad as it could be.

#### Quality of teaching of primary languages

- Teaching is lively and uses a good range of different strategies to stimulate and hold pupils' interests. Pupils' prior knowledge is well drawn on at the start of lessons. However, some plenary sessions are too short.
- The teachers' subject knowledge and pronunciation are good and there is good use of the target language. Pupils are firmly, but sensitively, corrected on their pronunciation. Some assessment strategies are used to check how well pupils have understood new learning.
- They have good opportunities to hear French spoken by the teacher and by native speakers on DVDs.
- There is some good use of language-learning strategies to help pupils deduce the meanings of new words and to remember numbers.
- Staff use information and communication technology well in all lessons to introduce new concepts and songs, revise vocabulary and develop speaking skills.
- Planning is satisfactory. Some learning objectives are not always clear enough and there is scope to plan more thoroughly for how additional adults can help in lessons.

#### Quality of the curriculum in primary languages

- The time spent on learning French is appropriate. All pupils in Key Stage 2 learn French and there is some teaching in Key Stage 1.
- The curriculum is heavily focused on speaking and listening. There are plans to introduce some aspects of writing to the oldest pupils.
- The school's scheme of work is based on the Key Stage 2 Framework and termly topics broadly met the needs of pupils. There is scope to sharpen the focus on intercultural understanding within the scheme.
- Learning is supported by useful displays in some classrooms. These emphasise key words and phrases. There are some useful links with other subjects, such as literacy.
- There are some French books which pupils browse for leisure.

#### Effectiveness of leadership and management in primary languages

- You are passionate about pupils learning languages and, together with the subject manager, have ensured that French has been successfully

introduced to all year groups in Key Stage 2. French features prominently in the school's development plan.

- The rationale for the choice of French is sound. The model of delivery by an external specialist teacher has been carefully considered and is effective.
- Subject leadership is satisfactory. A scheme of work has been drawn up along with supporting documentation for class teachers. The latter regularly observe the teaching of French, which aids the reinforcement of French at other times during the week.
- Monitoring and evaluation of the subject's effectiveness are at an early stage of development. Assessment procedures are informal but there are plans to develop these with the secondary schools that will receive the school's first cohort of pupils who have studied French.

Progress towards entitlement in Key Stage 2

- This is satisfactory.
- The senior leadership team has supported well the school's rolling programme of implementation that has ensured that all pupils in Key Stage 2 now learn French.
- The curriculum is, currently, mostly focused on speaking and listening and writing has yet to be developed.
- Both boys and girls enjoy learning French.
- Monitoring and evaluation of French are at an early stage of development.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- developing opportunities for writing for older pupils
- developing assessment procedures so that the school, pupils and receiving secondary schools have a clearer picture of pupils' progress
- broadening pupils' intercultural understanding
- making greater use of additional adults in lessons.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop modern languages in the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Michael McIlroy  
Her Majesty's Inspector