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Mr P Jameson  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Jameson

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

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and pupils, during my visit on 1 February 2010 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 nominated staff and two groups of learners, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of three lessons.

### Context

Since 2008, French has been taught by foreign language assistants to Years 3, 4 and 5. German is taught by an external specialist to Year 6 pupils.

### Achievement in languages

- The progress made by pupils in lessons is satisfactory overall. Pupils' speaking skills and their pronunciation are satisfactory overall. However, both these skills are stronger in German, where some pupils' pronunciation is good. They know key salutations and phrases, numbers, days of the week and months of the year.

- Listening skills are satisfactory. Most pupils listen attentively in lessons. Writing is developing satisfactorily. It is further developed in German, where Year 6 pupils are able to write simple sentences.
- Reading opportunities are underdeveloped in French where pupils have some opportunities to read from interactive whiteboards, flashcards and displays. Those learning German also have opportunities to read from good quality displays and from games that require them to read.
- Pupils' understanding of grammar is beginning to develop. Older pupils learning German are aware of genders but pupils' understanding of the significance of accents is at an early stage of development.
- The intercultural understanding of pupils is satisfactory. They can name the capital city of France, Parisian landmarks, some foods and customs. Pupils studying German knew about the previous partition of the country, German composers and other countries where German is spoken.
- Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the usefulness of languages. They know they are useful when travelling or working abroad and could name a number of careers, such as teaching, where they can be used.
- Learning languages makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' personal development. Behaviour in lessons was satisfactory overall.

#### Quality of teaching in languages

- Teachers' pronunciation is good and some is very good. Their subject knowledge is good. The target language is generally used well in lessons. There is some teaching of knowledge about language and of language-learning strategies. In a German lesson in Year 6, one pupil confidently explained what a cognate was.
- In French lessons, some opportunities to enable pupils to practise speaking and improve pronunciation are missed. In a German lesson, pupils had good opportunities to practise new vocabulary with each other.
- Teachers use a good range of resources, such as interactive whiteboards, puppets, games and songs. However, some activities last too long and some do not engage or challenge pupils sufficiently.
- Planning is satisfactory overall. At its best, it outlines learning objectives clearly and how plenary sessions will be used. In some lessons, the use of the plenary session is underdeveloped. There is scope to make greater use of these sessions to reinforce new learning and to check pupils' understanding.

#### Quality of the curriculum in languages

- Pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 learn French and those in Year 6 learn German. There is some French taught lower down the school. The time devoted to languages is good. There is some reinforcement of language learning in most classes at other times during the week. The language skills of pupils

who speak English as an additional language are drawn on well by the school to promote languages learning.

- Learning is supported satisfactorily by colourful classroom displays. A range of magazines and comics has very recently been purchased for pupils to read and browse at leisure.
- The school has adopted an external scheme of work which meets the needs and interests of pupils.
- There are, as yet, few extra-curricular activities where pupils are able to deepen and extend their knowledge of languages.

#### Effectiveness of leadership and management in languages

- You are very supportive of the introduction of ML. This is a priority in the school's development plan. The rationale for teaching French is well founded as pupils' holiday experiences and teachers' strengths have been considered. The school is realistic about the effectiveness and sustainability of its current model of delivery. It has appropriate plans to enable class teachers to deliver languages in the future.
- Staff have attended suitable training to aid the implementation of ML. A policy for ML has been drawn up and the subject leader has carried out a satisfactory evaluation of progress in the subject.
- Good links with a local secondary school have been developed. There is scope to make more use of these links to enhance teachers' development.
- Monitoring of planning and lessons and of the development of assessment procedures are at an early stage of development.

#### Subject issue: how well the school is implementing entitlement in Key Stage 2

- This is satisfactory. Teaching in languages is satisfactory overall. Both boys and girls enjoy languages and achieve satisfactorily in listening and speaking. Pupils receive some oral feedback on their work but arrangements for assessing their progress are underdeveloped.

#### Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- developing reading and opportunities for pupils to practise speaking in French
- strengthening the use of plenary sessions so that new learning is reinforced and can be assessed
- developing assessment and monitoring procedures.

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 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