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Mrs Dulson
Acting Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Dulson

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 3 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 three groups of pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of three lessons.

Context

French has been taught to Year 6 pupils for some years by an external specialist. Pupils in Year 3 have been learning French since November 2009.

Achievement in languages

- Pupils' speaking skills in Year 6 are good. They can ask and answer simple questions, pronounce and recite the French alphabet and spell words in French. Pupils in Year 3 know a number of key phrases as well as colours, numbers and salutations. Pupils' pronunciation is satisfactory overall.
- Listening skills are good. Pupils listen attentively in lessons.
- Reading skills are satisfactory because they have opportunities to read from flashcards, displays and, on occasion, the interactive whiteboard.

However, writing skills are underdeveloped. Pupils are developing a sound understanding of grammar.

- Pupils' understanding of the usefulness of languages is satisfactory. They know they can help with further study, travelling and in careers such as teaching and translating.
- Pupils' intercultural understanding is underdeveloped. Most know that Paris is the capital of France and can name one or two Parisian landmarks. They know some French foods but do not yet know, for example, that French is spoken widely outside France.
- French makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development. They enjoy learning a language and behaviour was good in lessons.

Quality of teaching in languages

- Teachers' subject knowledge and pronunciation are good. There is good use of the target language and pupils' pronunciation is corrected carefully and sensitively.
- Teachers use their pedagogical skills well to ensure pupils make good progress. Teaching is lively, fast paced and uses a good range of games, resources and strategies to capture and retain pupils' interest. Information and communication technology is used well. Plenary sessions are used well to revise and assess learning.
- Planning takes account of the needs of pupils in split-year classes and of pupils' different abilities. In a lower ability class, outstanding teaching enabled pupils to make good progress in learning the days of the week. Additional adults are used well to support those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and more able pupils are challenged well.
- Learning language strategies and knowledge about language are well taught. In a Year 3 lesson, pupils were taught about intonation and shown how to use their prior knowledge to construct the number 'vingt-sept'.

Quality of the curriculum in languages

- French is now taught regularly in two year groups. There is some provision in other year groups in Key Stage 2 and in other key stages.
- The time allocated to languages is adequate. Reinforcement of learning takes place outside formal lessons at other times of the week.
- Teachers follow a national scheme of work and activities in lessons match pupils' interests well. Some good links are made with other subject areas. In one lesson, pupils' literacy skills were effectively drawn on to help them recall the name of the French flag.
- Learning is supported by a satisfactory range of displays. There is scope to extend these throughout the school to raise further the profile of languages and extend pupils' knowledge of French culture.
- French is used occasionally by pupils in assemblies. There are currently no extra-curricular activities where pupils can deepen their understanding of

languages. There are few books, comics or magazines for pupils to browse for interest or leisure.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in languages

- You are supportive of the development of ML in the school. French is included in the school's improvement plan. There is a clear rationale for choosing French which is based on teachers' strengths and existing links with secondary schools. A subject action plan has been drawn up which sets out how French will be fully implemented in Key Stage 2.
- A new subject leader has recently been appointed. She has successfully introduced French to Year 3 pupils and purchased a new scheme of work designed to support class teachers. Training for staff to use this has been arranged, as has a languages day to launch the scheme. The existing policy for ML is being reviewed.
- There are good links with a local high school which provides an outreach teacher for lessons in Year 6.
- Monitoring arrangements and assessment procedures are underdeveloped.

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

- This is satisfactory. The school is working towards an effective model of delivery and has a clear rationale for this. Teaching of speaking and listening in the two year groups where French is taught regularly is good but writing is underdeveloped. Pupils' achievements in speaking and listening are not formally assessed or recorded.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- developing opportunities for writing for older pupils
- broadening pupils' intercultural understanding
- developing monitoring and assessment 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