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15 June 2010

Ms D Tomlinson
Headteacher
Ashwater Primary School
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Dear Ms Tomlinson

Ofsted 2010-11 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 7 June 2010 to look at work in 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 without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included interviews with staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of one lesson.

Achievement in languages

- Pupils are enthusiastic and respond very well to learning a language. They are confident speakers.
- Pupils have good accents and intonation and show a good understanding of basic grammatical rules.
- Their listening skills are developing well and they concentrate hard, even when the spoken French is rapid.
- Some older, higher attaining pupils are able to write several sentences in French on a familiar topic.
- Pupils have a limited understanding of the cultural significance of language learning.

Quality of teaching in languages

- The teacher is making good use of the Key Stage 2 framework for languages to support her long-term planning and is creative in the nature of activities she uses in the classroom.
- She models clear French for her pupils and they try hard to copy her accent and intonation.
- The use of the target language is good and is well supported by gesture and clarity of instructions. The teacher models well what she wants pupils to do and this allows her to use even more French. The extensive use of French in the classroom is valued by pupils and is seen as important in helping them to learn.
- A wide range of resources is used in lessons although pupils' use of computers in French is underdeveloped.
- Some tasks are differentiated to ensure that higher attaining pupils with more experience can write more extensively.
- Pupils' comprehension is regularly checked. The teacher uses the plenary well at the end of the lesson to check how well new language has been mastered. However, pupils are not formally assessed.

Quality of the curriculum in languages

- Whole-school curriculum planning for French is in the early stages of development. The school recently decided to adopt a published scheme and so detailed plans are not yet in place for the next cohort.
- The current time allocation for the weekly lesson for the mixed-age class is good. However, no follow-up is planned during the week in between these sessions.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in languages

- You provide good support for the introduction of French. In the early stages of formal development, the implementation of language provision has been carefully considered. This is reflected well in both the school and subject development plans.
- Well-received local authority training is available to the coordinator but not yet to the class teacher. Action plans make it explicit, however, that development time for both members of staff has been planned for before the subject becomes statutory.¹
- The governing body provides good support. Monitoring has not yet taken place but the school has indicated that it values the subject by including a comment about pupils' achievement in French in the annual reports.
- Transition arrangements at subject level are not yet developed.

¹ This inspection took place before it was known that the new primary curriculum would not be continued.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- planning for the development of all four skills over the key stage so that the school is aware of its end-point at the end of Year 6, and differentiating as much as possible so that higher attaining and/or older pupils are challenged
- broadening pupils' intercultural understanding
- ensuring that assessment systems are in place to inform short-term planning and support transition.

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

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

Yours sincerely

Anne Looney
Her Majesty's Inspector