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Mrs A Evans
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Evans

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 16 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, a governor and pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of two lessons.

Achievement in languages

- Pupils are making good progress in listening and speaking. Some Year 6 pupils are able to write short creative descriptions.
- They are enthusiastic learners of languages and can give reasons why they like learning French and its usefulness to them.
- They are confident when answering simple questions about personal details but less so when using new words and phrases for the first time.
- They are able to listen attentively and their pronunciation is accurate.
- They are starting to be able to link sounds to spellings and to appreciate grammatical differences between English and French.
- Their cultural awareness is good and they have an understanding of simple differences relating to everyday life in France and England.

Quality of teaching in languages

- Teachers plan a good range of activities that are fun and pupils respond with good behaviour and engagement.
- Resources are varied and of high quality and teachers make very good use of their interactive whiteboards to bring the learning to life.
- Pupils hear good models of French from teachers who have good subject knowledge, and through the use of recordings of native speakers.
- Teachers set suitably challenging learning objectives for the lessons and devise appropriate activities to allow pupils to meet them.
- Sometimes the change from understanding and repeating new language to using it independently is not structured carefully enough. As a result, some pupils are not confident in using the new language to practise tasks.
- Pupils are assessed periodically using the 'Languages Ladder' and they know how well they are doing through their languages portfolios, where they can assess their own performance. Colour-coding helps them to appreciate the progress they make each year.
- Formative assessment is a weaker aspect in lessons. Teachers do not always check in sufficient depth how well pupils are progressing and adjust their teaching accordingly.
- Links between the sound and spelling of words is explained well but sometimes too early, which inhibits the pupils' spontaneous use of new words and phrases.

Quality of the curriculum in languages

- The pattern of provision fully meets requirements in terms of time allocation and the scheme of work is securely based on the Key Stage 2 framework.
- The scheme of work is revised regularly in the light of experience and to meet developing needs in the school.
- There is a good range of resources, including individual digital recorders which the pupils proudly demonstrate to visitors.
- Enrichment events include a highly successful international day and pupils with particular talents and interests in languages are supported with extra-curricular clubs. For example, a group of boys have set up a German club and are studying the language, supported by the school's coordinator for special educational needs.
- The scheme of work contains insufficient references to opportunities to challenge the more able or support those needing more help with their learning, including those who miss lessons through absence.
- The curriculum in French makes a satisfactory contribution to development of pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in languages

- Leaders have set up an effective model for the delivery of ML based on a clear rationale for the introduction of the subject.
- The subject leader, who is recognised by the local authority for her expertise, and her colleague receive strong support from senior leaders and governors. The school has created a link governor role and the current link governor takes a keen interest in the subject's development, visiting regularly to gather first-hand evidence of the quality of the provision.
- Good monitoring systems are in place and include some observation of teaching.
- Information from the monitoring informs self-evaluation which is accurate and results in well-chosen priorities for improvement.
- Training for all involved in the leadership and delivery of the subject is well-focused to ensure the subject continues to develop.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- strengthening medium-term planning to identify more clearly the opportunities to challenge more able pupils and support those falling behind
- increasing the effectiveness of the presentation of new language to ensure that pupils move confidently to using the language for their own purposes
- sharpening formative assessment techniques to allow teachers to adjust their teaching as the lesson proceeds.

I hope that 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 under the URN for your school. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Elaine Taylor
Her Majesty's Inspector