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Miss C Oates  
Headteacher  
Elkesley Primary and Nursery School  
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Dear Miss Oates

**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 18 March 2011 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 two lessons.

**Achievement in languages**

- Pupils enjoy learning languages and are confident speakers. They work determinedly even when the task is challenging. A strength is the opportunity to use French creatively, developed through an emphasis on language learning strategies.
- Pupils are starting to be able to put together written sentences by the time they reach Year 6.
- Reading is developing well, but a greater emphasis by the teacher on using French to manage the classroom would provide additional support for developing pupils' listening skills.
- Pupils' intercultural understanding is good and includes an understanding of the need to break down cultural barriers. This is because they have many opportunities to research using the internet and there is a focus on cultural development across the school, through special days and by celebrating the languages of all pupils.

- The older pupils are given opportunities to develop good reading strategies, with challenging but interesting texts, where they are required to decipher the general meaning.
- In this small and relatively homogenous community, all groups progress equally well.
- Pupils have a good awareness of the advantages of learning languages for their future lives.

### **Quality of teaching in languages**

- The specialist teacher is passionate about her subject and conveys that to the pupils. Her linguistic skills are good and the class teachers are increasing their confidence through the new system of in-house development opportunities each term. There is scope for more sharing of successful primary teaching strategies, such as talk partners, to ensure even greater engagement.
- Lessons are planned well with good resources and a good mix of activities to appeal to a range of learning styles.
- The interactive whiteboard is used well to allow pupils to actively engage with text and to bring authentic voices and resources into the classroom.
- A good proportion of the routine classroom communication is in the target language, but there is scope for more regular and routine use to manage activities.
- The creative and flexible approach to differentiation within lessons takes advantage of the mixed-age classes. This ensures that those who are ready to move on can do so regardless of age.
- Assessment is developing well, with a range of strategies to inform medium-term planning and check the progress individual pupils are making.

### **Quality of the curriculum in languages**

- The curriculum is well considered to meet the pupils' needs. Pupils have opportunities to gain experiences of different languages.
- Progression is an area for further development, as it is not always clear from the schemes of work how this will be managed across the mixed-age classes year-on-year.
- Sufficient time is given to ML lessons, and the cross-curricular reinforcement in other lessons, for example in mathematics and science, is a strength.
- The learning environment promotes pupils' development well with displays which support their recall of language and structures.
- Links with secondary schools are currently insufficient to allow the sharing of information on pupils' progress.

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

- You and the other leaders in the school understand well the importance of language learning and are very supportive of it. The subject leader keeps well informed of current initiatives.
- The school has a sound rationale for the provision of languages. Development planning builds well on present practice, and sets out future intentions clearly.
- Resources for learning are good.
- Training is developed in-house and class teachers are increasingly confident when delivering their daily packages prepared by the subject specialist.
- Monitoring and evaluation of provision and practice are regular and lead to accurate self-evaluation, which in turn leads to satisfactory development planning.

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

- strengthening progression in curriculum planning
- developing stronger links with secondary schools
- increasing the use of French to manage activities in lessons and using a wider range of primary strategies to maximise engagement.

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

As I explained previously, a copy of this letter will be published on the Ofsted website. It may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection. Except in the case of academies, a copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

**Elaine Taylor**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**