

Modern Languages Survey Visits

Generic grade descriptors and supplementary subject-specific guidance for inspectors on making judgements during visits to schools

Subject feedback letters, following survey visits, normally contain separate judgements on:

- achievement
- quality of teaching
- quality of the curriculum
- effectiveness of leadership and management
- overall effectiveness in the subject.

In coming to these judgements, inspectors will use the relevant criteria and grade descriptors from the 2009 Section 5 evaluation schedule (up-dated in September 2010), as they can be applied to individual subjects. These descriptors are set out in the left-hand columns in the following pages. Alongside them (for achievement, teaching, the curriculum and leadership and management) are supplementary, subject-specific descriptors which provide additional guidance for modern languages. These descriptors should be applied in a way which is appropriate to the age of pupils involved. Except where otherwise indicated, descriptors are intended to be used on a 'best fit' basis.

It is important to note that this guidance is intended only to inform the judgements made by specialist inspectors carrying out subject survey visits. It is not for use on Section 5 whole-school inspections.

Achievement in Modern Languages

	Generic	Supplementary subject-specific
1	<p>Outstanding</p> <p>Achievement is likely to be outstanding when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ attainment is above average or high and learning and progress are outstanding <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ attainment is high and learning and progress are good 	<p>As appropriate to their stage of development, all groups of learners are confident speakers with good intonation and pronunciation. They develop a sense of passion and commitment to the subject and can use language creatively and spontaneously to express what they want to say, including when talking to each other informally and writing imaginatively. The four modern language skills are developing equally well and pupils use them creatively to increase their knowledge and understanding and to deal with the unexpected. Pupils have a strong awareness of the cultures of the countries and communities where the language is spoken. They show exceptional independence in their studies and can use a range of resources, including ICT, to develop their language skills and investigate aspects that interest them. An above average proportion continues to study languages in the next stage of their education.</p>
2	<p>Good</p> <p>Achievement is likely to be good when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ attainment is above average and learning and progress are good <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ attainment is average and learning and progress are good or outstanding. <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ attainment is low but there is convincing evidence that outstanding learning and progress are helping pupils' attainment to improve strongly. On rare occasions learning and progress may be good, but outstanding for some groups of pupils and improving overall. 	<p>Most pupils are able to work independently when given the opportunity, taking the initiative in their work and when working with others. They demonstrate originality, imagination or creativity in modern languages work. They enjoy learning languages and can explain the value of doing so. They strive to use the language to communicate orally and in writing. Increasingly they use the language for routine communication with the teacher, amongst themselves and with others in and beyond the classroom. They have a good knowledge and understanding of the cultures of the countries and communities where the language is spoken. They can apply grammatical rules to new situations and can write at length with support.</p>
3	<p>Satisfactory</p> <p>Achievement is likely to be satisfactory when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ attainment is average, above average or high and learning and progress are satisfactory <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ attainment is low but improving strongly and learning and progress are good. Or, there is convincing evidence that learning and progress are satisfactory but improving securely and quickly. 	<p>Pupils are generally dependent on their teachers but can occasionally work independently and take the initiative in developing their work. The majority are able to communicate their ideas orally, but they are often dependent on considerable support through written prompts. Pupils complete listening and reading activities with little prompting but are frequently unable or unwilling to deal with unpredictable elements in conversations. Their knowledge and understanding of the cultures of the countries and communities where the language is spoken is limited often to stereotypical examples. Their knowledge about language is also limited. Some learners require regular prompting when working in pairs or groups in order to continue to use the target language productively. They are generally interested in the subject.</p>
4	<p>Inadequate</p> <p>Achievement is likely to be inadequate if either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ learning and progress are inadequate <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ attainment is low and shows little sign of improvement, and learning and progress are no better than satisfactory with little or no evidence of improvement. 	<p>Pupils rarely show the ability to work independently or take the initiative in their work. They underachieve in one or more of the four skills. They demonstrate little creativity or originality in their subject work. Pronunciation is likely to be poor, hindering communication, and pupils are reluctant to speak in class or read aloud. Pupils are not able to use the language to communicate and have an underdeveloped knowledge and understanding of the cultures or countries/communities where the language is spoken. Few pupils show interest or enthusiasm in lessons for learning languages.</p>

Quality of teaching in Modern Languages

<p>1</p>	<p>Teaching in the subject is at least good and much is outstanding, with the result that the pupils are making exceptional progress. It is highly effective in inspiring pupils and ensuring that they learn extremely well. Excellent subject knowledge is applied consistently to challenge and inspire pupils. Resources, including new technology, make a marked contribution to the quality of learning, as does the precisely targeted support provided by other adults. Teachers and other adults are acutely aware of their pupils' capabilities and of their prior learning and understanding, and plan very effectively to build on these. Marking and dialogue between teachers, other adults and pupils are consistently of a very high quality. Pupils understand in detail how to improve their work and are consistently supported in doing so. Teachers systematically and effectively check pupils' understanding throughout lessons, anticipating where they may need to intervene and doing so with striking impact on the quality of learning.</p>	<p>Teachers communicate high expectations, enthusiasm and passion about their subject to pupils. They have a high level of confidence and expertise both in terms of their specialist language knowledge and their understanding of effective language learning. Carefully planned, imaginative activities guide and support pupils to communicate enthusiastically both orally and in writing in the target language and secure outstanding progress. Pupils use the language with little prompting for routine classroom communication as well as for specific purposes. Resources, including new technology and authentic materials, are used imaginatively to develop pupils' intercultural understanding, their ability in all the four skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing, their knowledge about language and language learning strategies. The precisely targeted support provided by other adults encourages all pupils to develop independence and a desire to use the target language for real communication. Assessment and marking are carried out in all four skills and conducted as far as possible in the target language.</p>
<p>2</p>	<p>Teaching in the subject is consistently effective in ensuring that pupils are motivated and engaged. The great majority of teaching is securing good progress and learning. Teachers generally have strong subject knowledge which enthuses and challenges most pupils and contributes to their good progress. Good and imaginative use is made of resources, including new technology to enhance learning. Other adults' support is well focused and makes a significant contribution to the quality of learning. As a result of good assessment procedures, teachers and other adults plan well to meet the needs of all pupils. Pupils are provided with detailed feedback, both orally and through marking. They know how well they have done and can discuss what they need to do to sustain good progress. Teachers listen to, observe and question groups of pupils during lessons in order to reshape tasks and explanations to improve learning.</p>	<p>Teachers have a clear understanding of the value of modern languages which they communicate effectively to pupils. They have a confident level of subject specialist expertise which they use well in planning and teaching languages. As a result, they use an appropriate range of resources and teaching strategies to promote good learning across all aspects of the subject and ensure pupils develop the skills they need to become independent language learners. Teachers have high expectations and pupils willingly participate in activities that require them to use the language to communicate orally and in writing. Teachers routinely use the target language for classroom communication and insist, where appropriate, on pupils responding in the same language. Text is used well to improve pupils' pronunciation and as a 'cue' for speaking and writing. Reading is used to develop intercultural understanding and for pleasure. Imaginative use is made of a breadth of listening materials to develop pupils' understanding of the spoken word. Assessment is carried out regularly in all four skills.</p>
<p>3</p>	<p>Teaching in the subject may be good in some respects and there are no endemic inadequacies. Pupils show interest in their work and are making progress that is broadly in line with their capabilities. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure. Adequate use is made of a range of resources, including new technology, to support learning. Support provided by other adults is effectively deployed. Teaching ensures that pupils are generally engaged by their work and little time is wasted. Regular and accurate assessment informs planning, which generally meets the needs of all groups of pupils. Pupils are informed about their progress and how to improve through marking and dialogue with adults. Teachers monitor pupils' work during lessons, pick up general misconceptions and adjust their plans accordingly to support learning.</p>	<p>Teachers understand how to maintain pupils' interest in the subject. They have a sound level of subject expertise which they use in their planning and teaching. As a result, they use a range of resources and teaching strategies to promote a satisfactory level of learning across most aspects of the subject. Teachers provide a sound model of the spoken language for their pupils to imitate, but they may use English too often and require their pupils to use the target language too little. The overuse of worksheets or standard activities in course books may limit progress and restrict pupils' knowledge about languages and how to learn them. Teaching promotes a modest level of intercultural understanding. The use of authentic resources is limited. Assessment in all four skills is irregular and limits pupils' knowledge of how to improve in one or more skill.</p>
<p>4</p>	<p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Expectations in the subject are inappropriate. Too many lessons are barely satisfactory or are inadequate and teaching fails to promote the pupils' learning, progress or enjoyment. <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Assessment in the subject takes too little account of the pupils' prior learning or their understanding of tasks and is not used effectively to help them improve. </p>	<p>Teachers are not able to engage pupils' interest in the subject. Their subject expertise is limited and, as a result, they do not provide the resources or teaching strategies to promote effective language learning. Overuse of English limits pupils' ability to acquire language learning strategies or prevents them from developing as users of the language for communication. Inadequate time is devoted to developing one or more skills. Indiscriminate use of worksheets and/or course books limits progress in one or more skills.</p>

The curriculum in Modern Languages

1	<p>The curriculum in the subject provides memorable experiences and rich opportunities for high-quality learning and wider personal development. The subject curriculum may be at the forefront of successful, innovative design. A curriculum with overall breadth and balance provides pupils with their full entitlement and is customised to meet the changing needs of individuals and groups. The subject's contribution to relevant cross-curricular themes including, as appropriate, literacy, numeracy and ICT, is mainly outstanding. As a result, all groups of pupils benefit from a highly coherent and relevant curriculum which promotes outstanding outcomes.</p>	<p>The imaginative and stimulating subject curriculum is skilfully designed to match the full range of pupils' needs and to ensure highly effective continuity and progression in their learning. In addition, innovative approaches to curriculum design ensure the needs of individuals and groups, such as those who already have competence in a language or would benefit from learning more than one language*, are exceptionally well met. There is an excellent balance between structured opportunities for learners to develop subject skills, knowledge and understanding and opportunities to engage in exciting real-life situations. A wide range of imaginative extra-curricular and enrichment provision ensures pupils have an extensive knowledge of the cultures of the countries and communities where the target language is spoken. Schemes of work clearly set out objectives for developing inter-cultural understanding.</p>
2	<p>The curriculum in the subject provides well-organised, imaginative and effective opportunities for learning and a broad range of experiences which contribute well to the pupils' development. The curriculum is adjusted effectively to meet the needs of most groups and a range of pupils with highly specific needs. The subject makes a good contribution to relevant cross-curricular themes including, as appropriate, literacy, numeracy and ICT. Enrichment opportunities in the subject are varied, have a high take-up and are much enjoyed.</p>	<p>The curriculum is broad, balanced and well informed by current initiatives in modern languages and includes opportunities for learning more than one language. All learners are provided with first-hand experience of the culture of the country where the language is spoken through visits or visitors or through the use of ICT. A balanced approach to curriculum planning ensures pupils have equal opportunities to develop all four modern language skills. The learning environment supports pupils well through displays which transport them to other cultures and provides support for the recall of vocabulary and structures, so they are encouraged and supported to use the language for real communication. Good links are forged with other agencies and the wider community to provide a range of enrichment activities to promote pupils' learning and their engagement.</p>
3	<p>The curriculum in the subject is adequately matched to pupils' needs, interests and aspirations and provides adequate preparation for the next stage of their lives, whatever their starting points. Provision for potentially vulnerable pupils is satisfactory. The subject's contribution to cross-curricular themes including, as appropriate, literacy, numeracy and ICT, is at least satisfactory.</p>	<p>The curriculum secures the pupils' broad and balanced entitlement in modern languages and meets statutory requirements where applicable. It provides for a range of pupils' needs and ensures they make satisfactory progress in their learning. Some links are forged with other agencies and the wider community, although the range of activity provided to enrich pupils' interest and learning may be quite limited. There are adequate opportunities for pupils to come into contact with native speakers of the language being studied. Schemes of work include an adequate balance between the introduction of new language and the revisiting and consolidation of what has previously been mastered.</p>
4	<p>The curriculum has significant shortcomings in meeting the needs of pupils, or particular groups of pupils, and makes insufficient contribution to their learning, enjoyment or development.</p>	<p>The curriculum does not ensure pupils' entitlement to the subject and does not secure continuity in their learning. Learners are given insufficient opportunities to develop creativity, linguistic competence, intercultural understanding or the skills needed to develop as independent language learners. The range of languages on offer* does not allow pupils to build on or exploit their previous knowledge and skills. There are insufficient opportunities for more able linguists in secondary schools to develop language competence in more than one language. Pupils do not have opportunities to experience the language first-hand through direct contact with native speakers. The curriculum focuses too strongly on studying the language structures rather than developing communicative competence. There is little by way of enrichment activity in the subject.</p>
		<p>* Applies for the most part to secondary schools.</p>

Effectiveness of leadership and management in Modern Languages

<p>1</p>	<p>Subject and senior leaders and managers are conspicuously successful in establishing a strong sense of purpose which involves work towards meeting or sustaining ambitious targets in the subject for all pupils. Morale is very high and belief in success runs through all staff involved with the subject. Rigorous and extensive monitoring, searching analysis and self-challenge lead to exceptionally well-focused plans for the subject. Actions taken are implemented with precision and managed thoroughly. As a result, the quality of teaching in the subject is at least good and leaders and managers at all levels are taking highly effective steps to drive up the quality of teaching still further. Consequently, achievement in the subject for all pupils is at least good.</p>	<p>Leadership at all levels is informed by a high level of understanding about language learning. At subject level, strong specialist expertise and vision underpin all modern language work. There is a proven track record of innovation. Subject reviews, self-evaluation and improvement planning are well-informed by current best practice and research in languages and in education generally. Subject leadership inspires confidence and whole-hearted commitment from pupils and colleagues, including recognising and encouraging the positive contribution that other stakeholders can make by sharing their expertise. There are effective strategies to delegate responsibilities where appropriate and to share good practice and secure high quality professional development. Language learning has a very high profile in the life of the school and contributes strongly to the school's ethos.</p>
<p>2</p>	<p>Subject and senior leaders and managers consistently communicate high expectations to staff about securing improvement in the subject. They galvanise the enthusiasm of staff and channel their efforts to good effect. Leaders and managers routinely make good use of a range of rigorous monitoring activities relating to teaching, other provision and outcomes. They have an accurate picture and understanding of strengths and weaknesses in the subject. Planning is founded on robust evidence and good-quality data. It is tackling key areas of weakness, including those in teaching, systematically and building on areas of strength. As a result, teaching is at least satisfactory and improving. Target-setting is realistic and challenging. Consequently, achievement in the subject is generally good, or there is substantial evidence that it is improving strongly.</p>	<p>Leadership is well-informed by current developments in modern languages. Self-evaluation and improvement planning are clearly focused on raising attainment and improving the provision for the subject. There is a shared common purpose amongst those involved in teaching languages with good opportunities to share practice, discuss the teaching and learning of languages and gain access to professional development. The subject reflects wider whole school priorities and has a prominent profile in the school. The subject leader encourages other stakeholders to make a positive contribution to the promotion of language learning.</p>
<p>3</p>	<p>Subject and senior leaders and managers are motivated to seek further improvement and are effective in focusing efforts on priorities in the subject. They monitor accurately the progress of all pupils and the quality of teaching and learning. Self evaluation is broadly accurate. Target-setting in the subject is based on accurate assessment information but is only adequately challenging. Suitable plans are in place aimed at improving areas of weakness in the subject and effective steps are being taken to secure high-quality teaching. Expectations are sufficiently high to bring about outcomes which are broadly satisfactory and improving or, if lower, there is substantial evidence that they are improving strongly.</p>	<p>Leadership is aware of current developments in the subject and incorporates these within its practice. A lack of consensus about the vision and aims of the department may lessen the effectiveness of development work. Inconsistencies in practice between languages and year groups may lead to variations in the outcomes and attitudes of pupils. Provision for the subject is monitored and reviewed regularly and there is a sound understanding of the strengths and priorities for improvement. There is some sharing of good practice, with modest access to subject-specific professional development.</p>
<p>4</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Subject and senior leaders and managers are not taking effective steps to embed their ambition for the subject. or ■ Target-setting in the subject is not used effectively to raise expectations and improve outcomes. or ■ Subject and senior leaders and managers do not drive and secure improvement. or ■ Subject and senior leaders and managers are not taking effective steps to secure satisfactory and better teaching. 	<p>Leadership is not well-informed about current initiatives in languages. Key statutory requirements and entitlements for languages are not met. Self-evaluation is weak and not informed by good practice in the subject. Opportunities for professional development are limited and, as a result, some staff lack the confidence and expertise to teach effectively. The subject has a low profile in the life of the school and the department is insular. Links may exist with the countries where the languages taught are spoken, but overall the subject leader does not do enough to ensure that all learners develop an appreciation of cultural differences or the benefits of language study.</p>

Overall effectiveness in Modern Languages

Outstanding (1)	Overall effectiveness in the subject is likely to be outstanding when: Achievement in the subject is outstanding, or achievement is good and outstanding leadership and management underpin the capacity for sustained improvement in the subject. At least one, of teaching or the curriculum in the subject, is outstanding, and neither is less than good.
Good (2)	Overall effectiveness in the subject is likely to be good when: Achievement in the subject is good, and good leadership and management provide secure evidence of capacity for sustained improvement in the subject. In exceptional circumstances, leadership and management may be satisfactory. At least one, of teaching or the curriculum in the subject, is good, and neither is less than satisfactory.
Satisfactory (3)	Overall effectiveness in the subject is likely to be satisfactory when: Achievement in the subject is at least satisfactory, and satisfactory leadership and management ensure adequate capacity for improvement in the subject. Teaching and the curriculum in the subject are at least satisfactory.
Inadequate (4)	Overall effectiveness in the subject is likely to be inadequate if any of the following are inadequate: <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Achievement in the subject■ Capacity for improvement, as evidenced by inadequate leadership and management of the subject■ Teaching or the curriculum in the subject
