

KGGS Governors visit form. Please complete and return to the clerk to governors

Link Governor	Jo Green		
Faculty / Member of staff Visited	Carine Soudanne, Head of Faculty, Modern Foreign Languages	Date	28 th January 2019
Purpose of Visit	MFL Link Governor visit		

Apologies to Carine and to the governing body for the length of time it has taken to produce this report. My work schedule and recovery from surgery earlier in the year has given rise to a long delay!

This was my first visit to the school as link governor for Modern Foreign Languages. Having studied both French and German to A level at KGGS, I have always maintained an interest in languages and look forward to working with Carine and the department during my time as link governor.

I asked Carine to give me some background on the department. At the time of my visit, the French teaching was covered by two native French speaking teachers and 2 part time teachers, with a member of staff of maternity leave. A German teacher was covering 6 hours per week of year 7 French. German was covered by Eva Kampichler, second in charge of the MFL department, plus one full time and one part time member of staff. Spanish was covered by Melanie Kattach plus another member of staff covering a long-term absence. At the time of writing this report, the member of staff on long-term absence has handed in her notice and will be replaced by a permanent member of staff (who is currently covering for her) in September.

A full time teacher with no additional responsibilities would teach 41 or 42 lessons per fortnight. Eva and Carine's timetables are reduced to 39 and 37 hours per fortnight respectively to allow them extra time for their additional responsibilities. (The member of staff currently on long-term absence was also second in Faculty and this part of her job was not covered until April. Carine undertook most of those additional responsibilities with the support of Melanie Kattach for subject specific matters.) Carine explained that despite the slightly complicated staffing issues, PPA time was being maintained. The staffing situation had led to a number of groups being shared by two teachers at KS3, but the department uses a notebook system and regular dialogue to maintain the flow of teaching and Carine feels this system is working well. German and Spanish do have some shared classes at KS4, but at this level, teachers focus on separate areas of the curriculum and Carine feels this system is also working well. At A level, all classes are shared by at least two teachers.

Where girls speak another language at home and want to take a GCSE or A level in that subject, the MFL department will support them through this process if possible (ie if a speaking examiner can be found for that particular language). This year, girls will take A level and GCSE Polish, GCSE Mandarin and A level Urdu. These will be additional subjects, with the girls still being required to continue the same number of subjects in school!

Carine noted that the introduction of languages at primary school still was not having an impact on the ability of pupils to learn languages at KS3 and beyond. In year 7, the girls only learn French, with the idea that they can learn the skills required to learn a language before year 8 when German and Spanish are introduced. Carine noted that some girls do struggle in year 8 with the introduction of two more languages.

Carine is aware that languages assistants could be seen as a bit of a luxury in the current financial climate, but has been delighted to have been able to have three assistants this year. There is a huge focus on speaking in the department, and the girls benefit hugely from having

the assistants available for speaking practice. At the time of my visit, there had been a suggestion that A level Spanish would not run, but 13 girls had expressed an interest in taking Spanish at A level. Since my visit, it has been confirmed that A level Spanish will indeed run.

At A level, group sizes remain quite small, but sufficient numbers for all programmes to run. Kings does not teach German at A level, so a small number of boys come to KGGS for A level German. Kings only run French when numbers are high enough, so the school does take boys for A level French as well.

Carine noted that the new GCSE exam formats were proving extremely difficult for the girls and they had felt a little demoralised after their mock examinations. The speaking and listening tests in particular were very difficult. The school was working with other comparable schools to feed back their concerns to the examination boards on their feedback forums. Grammar schools had noted that there was a large variance in marking between foundation and higher levels, with a great deal of lenience at foundation level and very punishing mark schemes at higher level. Carine had some concerns that languages would see a decline in numbers as girls began to have the perception that both the subject matter and the new examinations were too hard, despite achieving very good results.

I'd like to thank Carine for taking the time to see me and look forward to my next visit.

Signed _____ Jo Green _____

Date _____ 28/06/2019 _____