

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



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Mrs J Raven
Headteacher
Crossways Junior School
Knapp Road
Thornbury
Bristol
BS35 2HQ

Dear Mrs Raven

Ofsted 2010–11 subject survey inspection programme: modern languages

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and pupils, during my visit on 10 November 2010 to look at work in modern languages.

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 a morning registration, two lessons and a school assembly.

Achievement in languages

- Pupils are enthusiastic and confident and join-in very well in class. They clearly like French and say that they think it is important to learn a language. They can talk well about the activities that help them learn and really enjoy the range of active learning they do in French.
- They are developing good reference skills and learning very well how to work, in groups and independently, in French.
- Pupils listen in class carefully and pupils of all ages have very good recall of the language and structures they have learnt. Older pupils' ability to recall is particularly impressive.
- Over the course of their time in the school, pupils' oral competence develops extremely well. Older pupils are able to talk at some length on a range of topics they have learnt and perform dialogues confidently without scripts. Their pronunciation and intonation are excellent.

- Written work also shows a very good level of progression over the four years. By Year 6, pupils can write short paragraphs, express opinions and describe places, all with a good level of accuracy.
- Pupils have a very clear idea of what they need to do to improve their work. They are developing good intercultural understanding.

Quality of teaching in languages

- Teachers are good, enthusiastic role-models for their pupils. Lessons are planned well with clear learning objectives. Lessons have a good range of lively activities used in a structured way to allow pupils to gradually build up their skills and meet the learning objectives.
- There is a good and varied use of resources and the teachers use technology well to support the presentation and practice of language.
- There is very good use of effective primary practice, such as the use of talk partners to give pupils a chance to rehearse what they can then say in front of the class.
- Work is differentiated so that lower ability pupils can get the support they need and higher ability pupils are well challenged. This is particularly effective in writing.
- There is generally a good use of target language in the lessons for classroom instructions. However, teachers could extend this even further, by modelling what they want pupils to do and by showing rather than telling.
- Teachers are marking pupils' written work well, providing clear guidance on how to improve. They complete assessments of their pupils regularly so that the subject leader has a good overview of the progress the pupils are making.

Quality of the curriculum in languages

- The integration of modern languages in the whole school curriculum is excellent. It is particularly noteworthy that French is seen as a subject with links to other subjects not as an 'add-on'. In one lesson, the teacher made clear how work on celebrations would be linked to design and technology and in another class the French display board had explicit links to literacy.
- There are regular timetabled sessions each week and an expectation that follow-up will be carried out. This is also planned for.
- The plans are linked very well to the Key Stage 2 Framework and organised carefully to ensure that all strands of learning are covered. There is very good guidance for class teachers and equally good use made of local authority lesson plans to support teachers' planning.
- The level of enhancement outside the classroom is high. For example, pupils get involved in language days, go on theatre trips, participate in whole school performances in French and are developing contacts with

native speakers through the partner school project with Orléans. These all serve to foster pupils' positive attitudes further.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in languages

- The commitment to languages at senior leader level is outstanding. Your approach places a very strong emphasis on sustainability. The transition from specialist teaching to class teacher delivery, has been managed very well. Teachers' confidence and expertise were carefully audited and teachers were given targeted training and support to help them embark on what was for many a brand new subject.
- There is a clear rationale for the role of French in the school and its importance is signalled well to parents by being reported on annually.
- Improvement planning at both school and subject level is informed well by teachers' experiences and pupil voice. Targets are appropriate and achievable and actions to be taken are specific and detailed, particularly at subject level. The plans this year indicate the need for monitoring of provision. As this is the first year of class teacher delivery, this will be of real importance.
- Senior leaders and the governing body monitor well what is happening in French and the subject leader monitors pupils' progress well. The manner in which you record the more informal outcomes you see in French during your walk around the school is very effective and ensures that pupils see the subject as important as any other.
- The school makes very good use of links with external bodies, such as visiting theatre companies and providers of initial teacher education.
- Entitlement to learn a language in Key Stage 2 is very met well.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring that teachers' use of French is maximised to support the further development of pupils' listening skills
- ensuring that the monitoring of provision and outcomes at the end of this 'transition' year identifies any gaps in curriculum and teaching skills and leads to targeted training and support.

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

Anne Looney
Her Majesty's Inspector