

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 H Friend
Headteacher
Warmingham CofE Primary School
School Lane
Warmingham
Sandbach
CW11 3QN

Dear Mrs Friend

Ofsted 2011–12 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 25 May 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 the Chair of the Governing Body, staff and pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; observation of two lessons and a tour of Key Stage 1 to observe provision in languages.

Achievement in ML

- Pupils achieve well in languages across Key Stage 2. They enjoy learning a foreign language and can give many reasons for doing so. Pupils enjoy the activities that teachers plan for them. They listen and respond well to their teachers and work cooperatively with each other. They are very willing to speak and their pronunciation is good. Pupils enjoy singing and playing games in the language and say that this helps them to learn. Pupils feel that learning a language supports their study of other subjects, such as English.
- Pupils' listening and speaking skills are well developed and they routinely use the foreign language in the classroom, for example when asking permission to get a reading book. Pupils quickly learn new language and are able to recall previously acquired vocabulary and apply it in new situations. They show interest in how languages work and draw comparisons between the different languages they have studied.

- Pupils can read and write words and short sentences. However, their reading and writing skills in the foreign language are underdeveloped as they rarely have the opportunity to read and write extended texts independently.

Quality of teaching in ML

- Teachers communicate high expectations and enthusiasm for languages to pupils. Carefully planned and imaginative activities support pupils to communicate willingly in the foreign language. Teachers bring their skills as primary teachers to the teaching of this subject and ensure that activities suit the abilities, interests and needs of pupils.
- Resources are well designed and help to make lessons interesting. Information and communication technology is used highly effectively, for example to show an animated Spanish version of the story of *The three pigs*. There was clear enjoyment on the part of the pupils when they had to join in, saying 'I'll huff and I'll puff...' in Spanish. Furthermore, in an outstanding German lesson observed, pupils were able to use laptops independently to listen to new vocabulary, helping them to proceed at their own pace.
- Support from learning assistants is highly effective and they show interest in, and enthusiasm for, learning languages. This ensures that all pupils, of whatever ability, can participate in, and enjoy, language lessons.
- Teachers assess pupils' speaking and listening skills regularly, but assessment of reading and writing skills is underdeveloped. Procedures for formal assessment and accreditation are as yet at early stages of development.

Quality of the curriculum in ML

- The curriculum is broad and well-informed by current initiatives in modern language teaching. Pupils have the opportunity to study several languages and learn about the customs of people who live in the countries where these languages are spoken.
- The learning environment supports language development through classroom displays and by rooms and objects around the school being labelled in foreign languages. The appreciation of other languages and cultures is embedded in the wider curriculum. For example, in an assembly, pupils were invited to say 'Hello' in a number of different languages and had to identify where in the world these languages were spoken.
- 'Diversity days' help pupils to appreciate the lives of people around the world and effectively promote intercultural understanding. They enjoy the opportunity to eat foods and meet people from other countries.
- Pupils are aware that they can use the internet, dictionaries and reference books to help them in their language studies.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in ML

- Leadership at all levels, including governors, shows a commitment to, and enthusiasm for, language learning. There is a shared vision for the development of the ML curriculum.
- Languages have a high profile throughout the school. For example, pupils in Reception were observed using the foreign language to count how many pupils required a hot meal for lunch and pupils in Year 1 sang a song in Swahili that they had learnt, with clear enjoyment and enthusiasm.
- Self-evaluation is highly accurate and the school has a clear programme for the further development of language learning. However, the formal monitoring of individual pupils' progress is underdeveloped, and therefore planning is not yet sufficiently linked to improved outcomes for pupils.
- Entitlement to learn a language in Key Stage 2 is met well.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- creating more opportunities for pupils to improve their reading and writing skills in the foreign language as they move up through the school
- introducing formal procedures for assessment and accreditation in order that the school may better monitor progress across all skills and thereby further improve outcomes for pupils.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop ML 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

Joan Davis
Her Majesty's Inspector