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12 December 2019

Ms Maureen Scott  
Varna Community Primary School  
Chisholm Street  
Openshaw  
Manchester  
M11 2LE

Dear Ms Scott

### **No formal designation inspection of Varna Community Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 26 November 2019, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. The findings do not change the overall effectiveness judgement of outstanding from the last section 5 inspection.

This inspection was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for a no formal designation inspection of schools. The inspection was carried out to enable Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to better understand the quality of education in specific subjects provided by outstanding primary schools.

### **Main findings**

Languages provision has a high priority at your school. Pupils learn Spanish from Year 1 and continue with this language throughout key stage 2. All pupils have a weekly 45-minute Spanish lesson with a specialist teacher. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). In addition, some pupils study French in Year 6. You and your staff make sure that the wide range of languages that pupils speak at home is celebrated. You use displays and assemblies to highlight the importance of learning a language. Pupils are interested in languages and many perform short plays in Spanish at special events.

For the most part, the Spanish curriculum is ambitious. In some ways it exceeds the subject content of the national curriculum. Nationally, pupils are expected to start learning languages in Year 3. At your school, pupils start to study Spanish in Year 1. There is a strong focus on vocabulary in the curriculum. The specialist teacher revisits vocabulary regularly to help to ensure that pupils retain Spanish words in their memory. Similarly, the teacher practises simple questions and answers with pupils each lesson. Pupils can answer these rehearsed questions about themselves and their families with ease.

Pupils are taught to understand the links between how Spanish words are written and how they are pronounced. This is done systematically. The teacher then reminds pupils of these links when meeting new pieces of vocabulary. Pupils have a strong understanding of how to pronounce Spanish words.

Over their time at school, pupils are exposed to more complex reading texts in Spanish. The Spanish that they produce also increases in complexity. They begin to write longer sentences by adding connectives, for example. Pupils' bank of vocabulary increases. They can alter simple sentences to express themselves. As a result, pupils' achievement is relatively strong in Spanish by the time that they leave school. Pupils are well prepared to study languages in secondary school. This includes disadvantaged pupils.

There is a lack of precision in curriculum planning as far as grammar is concerned. Too little attention is given to ensuring that all pupils fully understand the basic building blocks of the language. Grammatical concepts are covered incidentally and are driven by the topic being studied. Pupils do understand some aspects of Spanish grammar. Pupils can explain the concept of gender and explain how adjectives agree with the noun, for example. Yet, coverage of grammatical concepts is not planned strategically. Pupils tend, therefore, to rely on learning set phrases and altering individual words to say what they want.

Your specialist teacher uses assessment effectively to check how well pupils have learned vocabulary and how well they understand simple texts in Spanish. She understands the need for pupils to develop both their understanding and their production of spoken and written Spanish. She uses a variety of resources, tasks and strategies to implement the curriculum. For example, she understands the step-by-step approach needed when introducing new vocabulary.

You and your senior team are committed to languages. You have all completed beginners courses in Spanish to help you to understand the specific nature of the subject. This has helped you to quality assure the curriculum and its delivery. You already have links with the languages department in a local secondary school to support you in further improving how well Spanish is delivered at your school.

## **Evidence**

I met with you, the assistant headteacher with responsibility for curriculum, and the specialist teacher of Spanish. I visited lessons in Years 2, 4 and 6 and spoke to pupils from these lessons about their work in Spanish. I looked at a selection of pupils' work from the lessons that I visited with the assistant headteacher and the specialist teacher of Spanish. I visited the Spanish drama club at lunchtime. I evaluated the curriculum plans for Spanish and policies for languages.

## **Context**

Varna Community Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school. There are currently 469 pupils on roll. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above average. Many pupils are bilingual or multilingual. The proportion of pupils who are entitled to free school meals is above average. The school has an average proportion of pupils with SEND, including pupils with education, health and care plans.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Manchester. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Michael Wardle

**Her Majesty's Inspector**