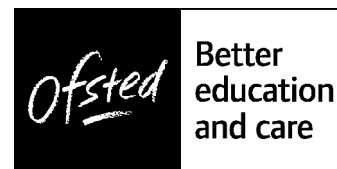


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20 September 2006

Mr B Norbury
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Dear Mr Norbury

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Modern languages

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 19 September 2006 to look at work in modern languages.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the subject, the visit had a particular focus on implementing languages entitlement.

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. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included: interviews with staff and pupils, meetings with the chair of governors and with local authority representatives, scrutiny of relevant documentation and analysis of pupils' work.

The overall effectiveness of modern languages was judged to be outstanding.

Achievement and standards

- Achievement and standards in modern languages are outstanding. All groups of pupils, many of whom have a wide range of learning difficulties, make excellent progress in relation to their starting points. Their pronunciation and intonation both in Mandarin and Spanish are particularly accurate, as is their copying of an impressive range of

Mandarin characters and their retention of vocabulary and simple structures.

- Pupils are very enthusiastic and confident language learners and their behaviour is excellent.

Quality of teaching and learning of modern languages

The quality of teaching and learning in modern languages is outstanding.

- Experienced teachers, from the local language college and the school's long-standing partner school in China, offer an excellent model of pronunciation and enthuse the pupils about both language and culture. Planning is very thorough and class teachers are closely involved in ensuring that language lessons are tightly matched to the pupils' needs.
- Written work is regularly marked and pupils evaluate their own learning each term. The school has good links with local secondary schools for the transfer of information about pupils' achievements, but the school is aware that there is scope to develop these further in languages.
- Continuing professional development (CPD) in modern languages is readily available to class teachers through regular exchange visits and local networks.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the modern languages curriculum is outstanding.

- Almost all pupils in the foundation stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 learn Mandarin and Spanish is currently taught from Reception to Year 3. The range of enrichment activities is a particular strength. There is an extra-curricular Mandarin club for the gifted and talented and creative and imaginative cultural activities such as tai chi.
- The regular programme of visits and exchanges develops pupils' self-esteem and makes them very open to and knowledgeable about people from other cultures.

Leadership and management of modern languages

Leadership and management in modern languages is outstanding.

- You are a passionate advocate for the importance of languages in improving pupils' life chances. You share with staff and governors a clear vision of the integral place of modern languages in the school's improvement priorities.
- The two current models of implementing languages entitlement make excellent use of existing resources and local, national and international

networks to build the school's own capacity for sustainable language teaching.

- The modern languages co-ordinator is very well-informed about national developments in languages and has a clear sense of the direction in which languages in the school need to move.

Implementing languages entitlement

The school is making excellent progress towards meeting pupils' modern languages entitlement in both Mandarin and Spanish. The current models of implementation provide very effectively for wide range of pupils' language learning needs, including those of the gifted and talented and those with learning difficulties.

Inclusion

Almost all pupils learn a modern language and all groups of pupils make equally good progress in the language and in their cultural understanding of the target language communities. The school offers a very safe learning environment in which pupils can develop their confidence and self-esteem as language learners.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- the further development of assessment in modern languages, so that pupils know exactly how well they are doing in different aspects of their language learning.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop modern languages in the school.

As I explained in my previous letter, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be published on Ofsted's website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Susan Wareing
Her Majesty's Inspector