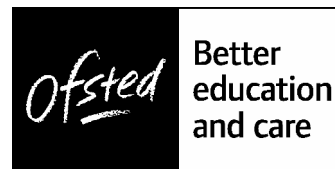


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20 September 2006

Mr J Hartnett
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Hartnett

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 18 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/aspect, 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, three lesson observations (Years 3, 4 and 5), scrutiny of relevant documentation and analysis of pupils' work.

The overall effectiveness of modern languages was judged to be good, with some outstanding features.

Achievement and standards

- Achievement and standards in modern languages are good. All groups of pupils, many of whom speak English as an additional language, make good progress at the level of single words and short sentences in all four skills. Pupils' pronunciation is accurate and they show good linguistic and cultural awareness. Some pupils are less confident to tackle simple written work.

- Pupils respond enthusiastically to learning Spanish and their behaviour is excellent.

Quality of teaching and learning of modern languages

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

- There is good collaboration in planning and teaching lessons between class teachers and Spanish specialists from local secondary schools. Resources, including Information and Communications Technology (ICT) are stimulating and promote a sense of purpose and fun.
- An appropriate balance of Spanish and English is usual but occasionally the pace of explanations in English is too long for the many pupils with learning difficulties or who do not speak English as a first language.
- Class teachers have ample opportunity for continuing professional development (CPD) through effective local networks and take increasingly confident ownership of the Spanish lessons. The level of support available to teachers is an outstanding feature of the provision.
- The school acknowledges that formal assessment is at an early stage and has plans to tackle this through the adoption of the Languages Ladder.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the modern languages curriculum is good.

- The development of cultural awareness is a strong tradition of the school and current modern languages provision builds on the school's well-established Comenius partnerships. All pupils in Key Stage 2 learn Spanish for thirty minutes per week, either as part of a local authority pilot or supported by the local language college. The choice of Spanish draws effectively on the linguistic background of a significant number of pupils. The school has firm plans in hand for the re-introduction of French to challenge the more able.
- Schemes of work are thorough and plan effectively for good linguistic progression through the Key Stage and beyond.

Leadership and management of modern languages

Leadership and management in modern languages are good

- You have recognised the contribution of languages to pupils' social development and economic well-being and have been quick to embrace opportunities to establish languages entitlement.
- Modern languages are effectively managed by a curriculum group which includes the yourself and your deputy as well as two class teachers

- The two current models of implementing languages entitlement make good use of local support networks to build the school's own capacity for sustainable language teaching. The school has identified the need to unite these models into a single programme most appropriate to the school's needs.

Implementing languages entitlement

The school has made innovative use of local partnerships to meet the modern languages entitlement of all pupils in Key Stage 2 which is already in place. This is an outstanding feature of the two models used. The current models of implementation provide very effectively for a wide range of pupils' language learning needs, including those of the gifted and talented and those with learning difficulties.

Inclusion

The school's very inclusive ethos ensures that all pupils are guided and supported to achieve as well as they can in the learning of the Spanish language and in their cultural awareness of Spanish speaking countries. All pupils in Key Stage 2 learn Spanish and there is no variation in the performance of any groups in speaking and listening. It is more marked in written work.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- the development of more formal assessment of pupils' achievements in modern languages, so that pupils know exactly how well they are doing in different aspects of their language learning and make a confident start to language study at Key Stage 3.

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