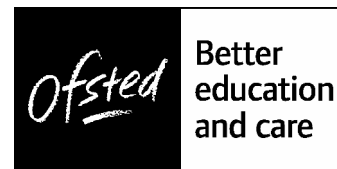


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20 September 2006

Mr Matthews
Headteacher
St Mary's CofE Primary School
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Dear Mr Matthews

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 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, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of one lesson.

The overall effectiveness of modern languages (ML) was judged to be satisfactory.

Achievement and standards

- All pupils study French in Key Stage 2 and all groups are making satisfactory progress. Pupils are mostly working around level 2 in speaking and listening.
- They have good pronunciation and can ask as well as answer simple questions with little prompting. Their writing is accurate but mostly consists of copying. Their understanding of how language works and about how to learn a language is less well developed.
- Pupils are very enthusiastic about learning a language and want to do so that 'you can make friends if you go there', as one said.

Quality of teaching and learning of ML

- The teaching is satisfactory.
- Speaking and listening are well taught with plenty of games, songs and fun activities which the pupils enjoy greatly.
- The teaching of reading and writing are less well developed and, as yet, links with other subject areas are not fully exploited. ICT is used rarely to support language learning. As yet there is little assessment of pupils' progress in order to inform longer term planning.

Quality of curriculum

- French has been introduced in the school over the past year and is taught by a specialist peripatetic teacher to small groups. The organisation is such that the groups alternate and so pupils currently only get 30 minutes every other week.
- The pupils very much enjoy learning a language because it is taught in a way that is both motivating and fun.

Leadership and management of ML

- The subject is satisfactorily managed and the capacity to improve is good. You are committed to developing languages because of the benefits it can bring to pupils and you are developing a clear vision of what effective language teaching looks like. This is well set out in the school development plan.
- There are initial plans for the class teacher to become involved in revising the language that has been taught by the specialist and for the links with other subjects, especially literacy, to be made explicit. There is currently little use made of the local and national networks to support the development of teacher expertise.

Implementing languages entitlement

- The school is making satisfactory progress towards entitlement. Plans are developing to increase the current provision from 30 minutes.
- The teaching of speaking and listening are good but the curriculum is generally restricted to these areas, with reading and writing being taught less systematically. Monitoring of how well pupils are doing is not well established.

Inclusion

All pupils in Key Stage 2 study French and all groups are achieving as well as they should, given the short time they have been learning it.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- to develop pupils' reading and writing skills
- to reinforce the language learning by making links with other areas of the curriculum
- to assess pupils' performance so that they know what to do to improve and to inform longer term planning.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop 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

Jo Peach
Additional Inspector