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Miss M Coleman
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Dear Miss Coleman

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 5 June 2007 to look at work in modern languages (ML).

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

The overall effectiveness of ML was judged to be good.

Achievement

Achievement is good.

- Pupils in Year 4 have been learning German for nearly one year. They can ask and answer questions about what they are called, where they live and their pets with good fluency and accuracy.
- Pupils have a good awareness of the different types of question and answer that are possible, for example they know three different ways to say 'my name is...'

- Pupils understand sentences spoken to them on topics they have covered but are less good at listening and reading to extended texts such as stories. Nevertheless, pupils' reading skills are developing well with the short texts they are given. For example pupils are able to identify cognates and are aware of the links between spellings and sounds.
- Pupils' writing is generally copy-writing such as labelling items on a worksheet. The higher attaining pupils sometimes write in full sentences. For example, they complete speech bubbles or captions, and the most able can do this without support.
- Pupils make good progress in the areas that they have covered such as oracy and intercultural understanding but they have not had as much opportunity to focus on language learning skills, knowledge about language and literacy.
- Pupils enjoy their language learning and know that languages will be useful to them later in life for holidays and jobs. They also said they are keen to learn a language so that they will 'find it easier at secondary school'. Pupils are aware that is useful to be able to communicate with those who speak another language and one pupil said, 'We can respect them if we can speak to them'.

Quality of teaching and learning in ML

The quality of teaching and learning are good.

- The teacher of the Year 4 class is a native speaker who is working with an advanced skills teacher from a nearby secondary school. This joint arrangement is working very effectively and is enabling pupils to make good progress in oracy and intercultural understanding.
- The lessons involve songs, games and lively activities which the pupils say they enjoy.
- Pace and challenge in the lesson seen was good. Pupils were expected to work quickly in order to give the German for some of the countries that they come from. The higher ability group were expected to work separately and be able to give full sentences about where their parents or grandparents came from. The other group were given more support and opportunities for reinforcement in order to be able to recognise five countries by the end of the lesson.
- The planning is well linked to the QCA schemes of work and links are being made with the Key Stage 2 framework for languages.
- ICT is used effectively. For example, teachers demonstrate language points using the interactive whiteboard and pupils sometimes use computers to do activities such as prepare a pictogram for a survey.
- The school works closely with the Italian embassy and the local authority which provides resources, network meetings and facilitates links with partner schools. This means that opportunities for teachers to develop their skills are good.

- Pupils get good feedback in class about what they are doing. For example, they know how to improve their pronunciation, and pupils know what they are good at and what needs further work.
- Pupils' progress is assessed using the school system for assessing all foundation subjects which is linked to the QCA statements. This is effective in the elements covered but it does not yet address each of the five the areas of the Key Stage 2 framework for languages.
- Pupils are able to consolidate what they have learnt. For example, when the register is taken they often answer a question in German. However, links with other areas of the curriculum are not well exploited.
- The teachers have attended training on assessment locally and are investigating the usefulness of assessment systems, such as the Language Ladder.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory.

- All pupils in Year 4 study currently German and there are after school clubs in French, Spanish and German for several year groups.
- Pupils in Year 4 currently have 30 minutes of discrete lesson time for learning German and have some follow up during the rest of the week, for example, when the register is taken. These pupils will continue to learn German for the rest of their time at this school.
- From September 2007, pupils in Years 3, 4 and 6, plus possibly those in Key Stage 1, will learn Italian. The teachers and support staff will be supported by the Italian embassy and by the Local Authority.
- The scheme of work is carefully planned and has links to the Key Stage 2 framework and QCA scheme of work. The focus is currently on oral work and intercultural understanding but there are plans to develop further the other aspects of literacy, language learning skills and knowledge about language.
- The resources are well selected to support the objectives but there are too few opportunities for pupils to work on longer stories or authentic songs.

Leadership and management of ML

Leadership and management are good.

- The rationale for teaching languages is clearly articulated and builds on the school policy of celebrating links with other parts of the world. 26 different languages are spoken by pupils but few speak German and the school wanted to offer all pupils the chance to learn a new language.
- The school has begun to introduce languages into the curriculum using a pilot which builds on current strengths. This has meant that pupils in

Year 4 started with German as the school has a teacher who speaks fluent German.

- Teachers, governors and parents are all involved in the decisions about language teaching and progress is carefully monitored. The school has a clear understanding of its strengths and areas for development.
- The headteacher is strongly supportive of languages and insists that they are introduced as part of a planned and coherent policy. The introduction of Italian from September 2007 will allow the school to exploit the links it already has with Italy and to make the most of the help available locally to train teachers.
- The school is giving some thought to how it will transfer information to the secondary schools and the main vehicle for this will be reports on pupils' progress which are likely to be linked to the Language Ladder.
- The school is also investigating ways to improve the curriculum to ensure that it addresses all the areas of the Key Stage 2 framework for languages and to ensure that pupils receive a full hour for languages.

Implementing languages entitlement

Languages entitlement is satisfactory.

- Currently all pupils in Year 4 learn a language. Plans are well established to ensure that all pupils in Key Stage 2, and many in Key Stage 1, will learn a language from September 2007.
- The model involves all class teachers who will be supported by a local secondary language teacher, the Italian embassy and the local authority to ensure that the class teachers have the appropriate language and pedagogical skills.
- The rationale for teaching languages supports the whole school development of links with Italy as well as offering all pupils the chance to learn a new language.
- Pupils are offered the opportunity to learn other languages such as French, Spanish and German through after school clubs.
- Plans to allow pupils a full hour of language learning are not yet fully developed and the curriculum does not yet fully address areas such as literacy, knowledge about language and language learning skills.

Inclusion

Inclusion is good.

- All pupils in Year 4 learn a language and they are divided into two groups by ability. This allows the teaching to be more carefully focussed on the different needs of the pupils and all pupils to make good progress in the areas they have covered.
- Higher attaining pupils are given plenty of extension work and are expected, for example, to give full sentences and to work from memory as often as possible.

- Pupils who need more support are given models to copy and are allowed to refer to support prompts where necessary.
- Pupils with English as an additional language make progress in line with their peers.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- continue to develop the teaching of reading and listening using extended texts
- develop further the links with other areas of the curriculum so that languages can be reinforced beyond the 30 minutes of discrete lesson time
- continue to develop the curriculum so that areas such as language learning skills, knowledge about language and literacy are fully integrated
- continue to work on developing assessment procedures which will allow effective analysis of pupils' strengths and weaknesses and which can be used to transfer information to other schools.

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. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Joanna Peach
Additional Inspector