

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404040
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



27 May 2007

Mr Alan Dean
Headteacher
Ryvers Primary School
Trelawney Ave
Slough
Berkshire
SL3 7TS

Dear Mr Dean

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 24 May 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 staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of three lessons.

The overall effectiveness of ML was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

Pupils achieve well.

- Pupils make good progress in speaking and listening. They have good pronunciation and, after two years of language learning, they are able to understand stories and rhymes which are read out to them.
- Pupils are developing good reading skills, for example, they are able to make links between sounds and spellings, they are able to work out the meaning of words from the context and they are beginning to use

dictionaries. They do not, however, work from extended texts or authentic books very often.

- Writing is mostly copy writing although occasionally older pupils complete sentences, for example, about monsters they have drawn.
- Pupils are beginning to develop a good understanding of the way languages work and regular links are made with what pupils have learnt in literacy lessons.
- Pupils are encouraged to make links with the languages they already know but this aspect is not systematically developed.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of the culture of the country whose language they are studying and they see this as very important. As one pupil said, 'It's fascinating to learn about other people, it even stops racism... all cultures are connected, aren't they?' Two pupils mentioned how lucky they were to be learning a language and one said, 'It should be the law for everyone to learn languages'.
- Pupils also know that languages will be useful to them in later life, both at their next school and in jobs. All pupils in Year 5 agreed strongly that they would want to continue with languages at their next school.

Quality of teaching and learning in ML

Teaching and learning are good.

- Teaching is well planned and well linked to the Key Stage 2 Framework for languages.
- The school is part of a cluster of local schools and makes very effective use of the training and local support networks for primary languages.
- Work is well matched to the ability of the pupils. Pupils who need more support are given extra help from the teachers and adults as well as carefully designed support sheets. Higher attaining pupils are often given challenging tasks and expected to work from memory.
- Pupils enjoy the creative aspects of their language learning, for example, they like the drama and songs that they have to perform.
- Pupils use language spontaneously in class and in the playground to greet others and are keen to demonstrate their talents.
- Pupils are given feedback on their performance in class but they are not always aware of what they need to do to improve.
- Formal assessment of pupils' performance is at the early stages but there are good plans to link this to the European languages portfolio to provide a record for secondary schools.
- Some class teachers are improving their subject knowledge by working with the specialist language teacher who has excellent skills in both French and Italian. Each lesson plan has a clearly identified section to enable the class teacher to follow up the lesson but this is not yet being used systematically by all staff.
- Pupils do not often use ICT to assist their language learning.

Quality of curriculum

The curriculum is good.

- All pupils in Years 1 to 5 study a language. Those in Key Stage 1 do so during teachers' planning and preparation time and those in Key Stage 2 do so in normal lesson time. French is taught to Years 3 and 4 and Italian is taught to Years 1, 2 and 5. In order to fit in with the local arrangements, French will be taught to all pupils in Years 3 to 5 from September 2007 and then to all pupils in Key Stage 2 by 2008.
- The curriculum is strongly based on the Key Stage 2 framework for languages and all elements are covered, with particular strengths in oral work and intercultural understanding.
- Resources are very carefully selected and include traditional tales and songs. The curriculum is carefully planned to meet the needs of all the pupils. It takes into account how much English they speak and their different learning needs.
- There are good links with native speakers through the foreign language assistant scheme.
- Links with other areas of the curriculum are not yet well developed.

Leadership and management of ML

Leadership and management are good.

- The rationale for teaching of languages is strong. This is set out in a policy but it is also very clear that pupils believe that learning a language is an important skill.
- The visiting specialist language teacher has an excellent vision about how to develop languages in the school and is driving the programme forward with the support of the senior leadership in the school and staff such as the teacher in charge of secondary liaison for MFL.
- The programme of support from local networks means that the school's development of primary languages has been carefully planned to fit in with local initiatives.
- The school has a clear and accurate analysis of the strengths and areas for development. It has good plans to address issues such as the need to strengthen the links with other areas of the curriculum, to involve class teachers more fully and to develop assessment procedures further.
- All pupils in the year groups where languages have been introduced are expected to learn a language. This includes pupils from the autistic unit and those with other learning difficulties. They are carefully supported both by the teacher and by support assistants and make good progress.

Implementing languages entitlement

- Currently all pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2, except Year 6, study either Italian or French depending on their year group.
- French will be offered in curriculum time to all pupils in Key Stage 2 by September 2008 and Italian will be offered to all pupils in Key Stage 1 using time released through planning and preparation time.
- The current provision is by a visiting specialist for approximately 40 minutes a week per class. This is sometimes supplemented by the class teachers in Key Stage 2, who generally remain in the classroom to observe the lesson. However, lessons are not always systematically followed up by the class teachers despite careful notes provided by the specialist.
- The visiting specialist has designed a scheme of work that suits the needs of pupils in the school, has been shared with all staff and is firmly based on primary teaching techniques.
- Links with secondary schools are developing well using the local cluster networks and the plans to assess pupils using a common format will help to ensure that the secondary school has information on what pupils have learnt.

Inclusion

- Pupils of all abilities are included in lessons. The pupils from the autistic unit take full part in the lessons with the support of their assistant and they make good progress, especially in speaking and listening.
- Support staff are well deployed to ensure that all pupils have access to language learning, including those for whom English is an additional language and those with other difficulties.
- All groups of pupils make good progress and those with special needs often make better progress in speaking and listening in languages than they do in other subjects they learn at school.
- Both boys and girls with a wide variety of different backgrounds enjoy the lessons and participate equally.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- increasing the links between language learning and other areas of the curriculum
- involving all class teachers more systematically to ensure that pupils have more time for languages beyond the 40 minute session
- continuing to investigate ways of assessing and recording pupils' progress.

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