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Mrs D Martin
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Dear Mrs Martin

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 11 December 2007 to look at work in modern languages (ML).

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.

Schools are expected to provide an entitlement for all pupils in Key Stage 2 to learn a modern language by 2010. 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 evidence used to inform the judgements made included: interviews with staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, and observation of one Key Stage 1 lesson and two assemblies where pupils sang in Spanish. Spanish has been introduced this year from Year 1 to Year 6.

Achievement and standards

- Pupils listen well and respond to their teacher's instructions in Spanish, for example when playing physical response games.
- They speak confidently and accurately, with good pronunciation.
- They recall words from previous sessions well.
- Reading and writing are at an early stage of development, but firm foundations have already been laid for these skills.

- Pupils are proud to say words in their home or heritage languages.
- They are keen to talk about how many languages are spoken in their school and view languages very positively. Pupils whose mother tongue is not English do very well in Spanish lessons.
- Pupils are very excited about their current language-learning and are keen to learn more. One Year 6 pupil talked enthusiastically about when she comes into the classroom and realises which subject is about to start: 'Yes! We've got Spanish!'

Quality of teaching and learning in ML

- The main Spanish teacher is an experienced specialist and is both knowledgeable and very enthusiastic.
- She knows a lot about Spain and the wider Spanish-speaking world and pupils respond very positively to work involving intercultural understanding.
- Pupils feel relaxed in Spanish lessons, saying that their teacher 'asks you nicely to do things'. They are consequently very motivated.
- Planning is very good. Clear learning objectives are shared expertly with the pupils. Activities are lively and varied, with games featuring in all lessons.
- Resources are good. The interactive whiteboard is used well to present new language in a lively way. Artefacts bring the language and culture alive for the children, creating added excitement in lessons. Spanish resources are being built up; for example, stocks of laminated cards are being developed, but this is still 'work in progress'.
- Current emphasis is rightly on listening and speaking, but older pupils are learning how to make links between sounds and spellings.
- Rewards are used to encourage use of the target language, and this process could usefully be taken further.
- Assessment is good and developing fast. Oral feedback to pupils is clear and encouraging. Older pupils use helpful self-assessment sheets which reinforce their learning. Parents will receive a report on pupils' progress in Spanish later in the year, and the Languages Portfolio is to be used for transition to secondary school.

Quality of curriculum

- All pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 learn Spanish. They have discrete, specialist lessons for one hour once a fortnight and class teachers reinforce the language on a day-to-day basis between formal lessons, for example, at registration time.
- There are already good examples of Spanish being embedded in the whole-school curriculum. During a recent science day pupils reinforced their learning by undertaking activities on the planets in Spanish. Music teachers have taught pupils *Feliz Navidad* for special Christmas assemblies.

- Next term pupils will learn some Chinese, as part of the Year 5/6 topic on Chinese new year.
- Staff and pupils talk of the impact that Spanish has had on the curriculum. Class teachers and teaching assistants have responded positively to the new curriculum and some take opportunities to develop their own learning in Spanish. Awareness has also been raised of the other languages spoken by pupils and teachers in the school, and in the wider school community.

Leadership and management of ML

- The leadership and management of languages are outstanding.
- The school has a very clear rationale for primary ML in school, with decisions about which language, and how, by whom and when it should be taught made after consultation within the school community and with external advisers.
- The senior team and governors support the initiative fully, and appropriate resources have been allocated to developing it.
- The languages coordinator is a very experienced teacher of foreign languages and of English as an additional language.
- ML is part of the language faculty of the school, enabling the coordinator to work closely with the literacy coordinator. An audit of teachers' language knowledge has been undertaken.
- Languages are an integral part of school management systems. For example, the languages coordinator is observed teaching and her work monitored by her line manager.
- The languages coordinator attends all staff meetings and uses these opportunities to update class teachers on Spanish developments and provide suggestions as to how they can reinforce learning.
- The school intranet is used to provide Spanish materials and guidance for class teachers to develop activities with their pupils.
- Teaching assistants, who work with the Spanish teacher whilst class teachers have PPA time, are developing their skills and knowledge and have the potential to provide valuable links to overall learning for the pupils in their classes.
- Dialogue has already been established with the school's main destination secondary school, which is adapting its Key Stage 3 curriculum provision from September 2008 to build on pupils' knowledge of Spanish.
- The school is now set to work with two other local secondary schools to which substantial numbers of Year 6 pupils transfer, to ensure successful transition.

Implementing languages entitlement

- Progress towards the implementation of languages entitlement is good.
- All pupils from Year 1 onwards study Spanish.

- There is a good awareness amongst the whole school community of languages developments and a readiness to embed them further within the school curriculum.

Inclusion

- This is a strength. All pupils from Year 1 learn French, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities.
- Similarly, teachers and teaching assistants are involved, and there is a collective determination to make the initiative successful.
- Pupils' home languages and culture are celebrated in this multilingual school. Pupils whose first language is not English – including some whose English is at a very early stage of development – make good progress.
- Both boys and girls are keen to learn languages.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- developing further the scheme of work for Spanish, including resources for reading and writing, to ensure progression year-on-year
- creating topic opportunities to feature the main minority languages of the school, for example as already planned for Chinese
- using the school rewards system more fully to develop target language use by pupils
- extending current links with local secondary 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

Anne Feltham
Her Majesty's Inspector