

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

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



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Mr R Slaney
Headteacher
Mrs Mary King's C of E Primary School
Moor Lane
Martin
Lincoln
Lincolnshire
LN4 3RB

Dear Mr Slaney

Ofsted survey inspection programme – modern languages

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and those of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 28 March 2008 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 two lessons and one registration period.

Achievement and standards

- Pupils have made good progress since beginning to learn French in September 2007.
- Standards are best in listening and speaking. Pupils are able to respond to written French but have limited experience of writing.
- Pupils of all abilities make equally good progress because of the strong focus on speaking and listening and because they receive good support from teaching assistants (TA).

- They make good progress through a number of activities such as singing and playing games. They do their registration in French and also took part in a harvest festival in French.
- They make good progress because of the great enthusiasm they have for French and they derive enjoyment from learning.
- In pairs they work well and concentrate fully on the task, speaking confidently and often accurately.
- They learn to recognise French words which have the same root as English words.
- They relate the language well to their knowledge of France.

Quality of teaching and learning in ML

- Teachers' subject knowledge is at least adequate. There are also two TAs with 'A level' French skills who are supporting language teaching very effectively.
- Teachers have worked hard to improve their skills.
- They also use recorded material by native French speakers and you would like to find a local French speaker to provide a role model.
- Teachers' planning is outstanding and has a significant impact on inclusion. It is based on tasks suited to individual ability and work in other curriculum areas.
- Planning encourages a variety of ways to use French, such as singing and simple role-play
- Training for delivering ML has been satisfactory. The school felt that an external course was helpful to a degree but also that it focused on selling a particular scheme which the school bought and did not find successful. Further in-school training is now planned for all staff.
- Assessment is outstanding. There is an effective scheme in place based on the four skills and staff have accurately assessed levels and progress thus far.

Quality of curriculum

- Key Stage 1 pupils have some introduction to key words and phrases usually in a cross curricular context.
- In Key Stage 2 pupils all study French which is taught as one main focus lesson each week of about half an hour and supported by short periods of consolidation elsewhere in the week. Registration is conducted in French and Art (colours) Geography (weather) and other curriculum areas have presented opportunities for the language to be used.
- Teachers and a TA have sufficient language expertise to deliver the Key Stage 2 curriculum.
- The provision is bespoke to the school and is planned by taking elements of a number of different schemes and frameworks and fashioning them to suit the school.

- Plans are in place to extend teaching and learning across the four skills with a continuing emphasis on speaking and listening.
- The curriculum meets the needs of all learners, through good planning and the well-planned use of TA and a range of tasks.
- Pupils are not withdrawn from ML lessons.
- Although interactive white boards play a central part in language learning, there is insufficient use of other areas of information and communication technology (ICT).

Leadership and management of ML

- You have responded thoughtfully and with great effect to the need to introduce a ML and have considered the outcomes of a range of experiences and support within partnerships of schools before devising your own plans.
- ML features in your self-evaluation and school improvement planning with clear objectives and action plans.
- You have relied on existing subject knowledge from within the staff, which meets the needs of learners. There has been no specific initiative to raise personal standards.
- The school has provided training for all staff by bringing the LA primary ML consultant into school. You have also benefited from support from a local specialist language college (although it is not a feeder to this school) and a close partnership with another local primary school.
- Governors and the local community are fully supportive of the ML teaching in school.
- Planning for progression between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 is difficult because pupils move to several different schools. Preliminary contact has been made.
- All pupils study French.

Implementing languages entitlement

- You are making good progress towards implementing languages entitlement throughout Key Stage 2 by 2010.
- All pupils enjoy learning French and are making good progress.
- You have also small cross-curricular experiences in place during Key Stage 1.
- Your approach has been well planned. You have considered all the available options and devised your own scheme best suited to the school.
- You have successfully worked in partnership with other local schools.

Inclusion

- Teaching and learning with an emphasis on speaking and listening ensures that all pupils are able to enjoy success in learning French.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- increasing the use of ICT in ML learning
- establishing paths for pupils' progression into 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

Peter McKenzie
Additional Inspector