

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

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



07 April 2008

Mr K Pavey
Headteacher
Deaf Hill Primary School
Trimdon Station
County Durham
TS29 6BP

Dear Mr Pavey

Ofsted survey inspection programme – implementing languages entitlement in primary schools

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and for the help of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 6 April to look at work in modern languages.

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 included interviews with staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of two lessons.

Context

French is taught to all classes in Key Stage 2. Recent developments, however, have concentrated on the Year 3-4 class. Although the school has taught modern languages in the past it is only since last autumn that it has done so in a planned and systematic way. It has adopted the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) scheme of work.

Achievement and standards

- Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have a secure knowledge of the vocabulary they have covered this year. When given the opportunity they can

apply this knowledge quite effectively, for example by doing mental arithmetic and building simple sentences.

- Their pronunciation and intonation are good. They have a good grasp of the relationship between the way some words are spelled and how they are pronounced. They are helped in this by maintaining a useful personal phonetic vocabulary book.
- Many pupils can copy write single words accurately and the most able can spell words from memory.
- They are fascinated by and know some interesting aspects of French culture.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to the subject. They enjoy lessons and have a good understanding of why it is important to learn a new language.
- They behave well in class and perform oral work with lots of confidence.
- The rate at which the units in the scheme of work are covered is not sufficiently rapid to ensure all pupils make good progress. Pupils say they would like to learn to speak in full sentences and not spend so long practising material they have already mastered.

Quality of teaching and learning in modern languages

- Planning is very thorough. The teachers have a clear and precise idea of what is to be learned in each lesson and prepare well-chosen, relevant activities to ensure that their objectives are met.
- A good variety of enjoyable activities gives pupils plenty of opportunities to memorise and to practise the words they have learned.
- Relationships are very good. The teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well. They use praise and encouragement effectively to motivate the pupils and to build up their confidence.
- Pupils respond well. They carry out group and pair work with great diligence. They concentrate throughout the lesson and are eager to volunteer answers when asked. They clearly enjoy the work; many say French is their favourite subject.
- During lessons, teachers monitor closely how well pupils have learned what has been taught.
- There is a wide spread of ability in each class and the work is not designed well enough to challenge the most able pupils. Some of the least able need more support.
- The teachers do not use French much in lessons, for example for giving instructions.

Quality of curriculum

- The time allocated for the subject is adequate for the QCA scheme of work.

- There is a strong emphasis on developing pupils' knowledge of French culture. This is supported by the very beneficial relationship the school has forged with a partner school in Amiens. The enthusiastic use made of this link and the plans to build on it in future make this a distinctive feature of the school's provision.
- The subject leader has good ideas for developing links between French and other subjects in the curriculum, but these are not yet documented or agreed practice across the school.
- The QCA scheme of work has been adopted but not yet adapted to reflect the school's own approach. For example, the school has no deadlines for the coverage of each unit nor specifications for how the link school in France is to be exploited.

Leadership and management of modern languages

- The school's well written policy presents a cogent rationale for the subject and sets out a comprehensive list of objectives.
- A highly effective action plan accurately identifies all the main issues for phasing in the subject over the next few years. Many of its objectives have already been achieved. It also identifies the main issues that remain to be tackled.
- The subject leader makes good use of the support available both in and beyond the school.
- The role of the subject leader in monitoring, evaluating and improving the subject is undeveloped.

Implementing languages entitlement

- Implementing pupils' entitlement to a modern language is satisfactory. Plans to phase in the subject in time for 2010 are well thought out. The rationale for the chosen curriculum model is simple, clear and sensible.
- Only one teacher has received relevant training but plans are in hand for this to be extended. Future training needs to develop teachers' fluency and pronunciation as well as their techniques for teaching the subject.
- Progress to date through the scheme of work has been slow.
- Pupils' progress in the subject is not formally assessed and recorded.
- Liaison with the main partner secondary school is not yet underway.

Inclusion

- All pupils in Key Stage 2 have equal access to French.
- All pupils enjoy learning the language and most achieve at least satisfactorily.
- There is no discernible difference in the achievement of boys and girls. However the most able pupils are not making rapid enough progress.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- planning work better to meet the needs of the most and least able in the class
- devising a method for assessing and recording pupils' progress
- involving the main partner secondary school in future plans
- making sure that all staff receive training and support for their language skills as well as in teaching methods.

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

Derek Neil
Her Majesty's Inspector