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Mrs J M Grime
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Dear Mrs Grime

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 01 July 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, analysis of pupils' work and observation of three lessons and one registration session.

Context

Spanish has been formally taught to all pupils in Key Stage 2 since 2006. Most classes are taught by class teachers and one is taught temporarily by a higher level teaching assistant.

Achievement and standards

Achievement is good.

- The progress made by pupils in the lessons observed was good.
- Pupils' speaking and listening skills are well developed. In all lessons, pupils listened carefully and successfully repeated new vocabulary. In one lesson, pupils answered questions from the teacher in full sentences and then confidently asked their fellow pupils a question.
- Pupils' pronunciation is sound.
- Reading strategies are developing as pupils receive increasing opportunities to read Spanish. Pupils are able to work out the meaning of new vocabulary by using cognates. For example, in one lesson, pupils correctly deduced that a 'serpiente' was a serpent or snake.
- Writing is at an early stage of development.
- Pupils' understanding of basic grammar is developing. They are aware of the position of adjectives and older pupils are beginning to understand the different genders of nouns.
- Pupils enjoy learning Spanish and they are keen to learn. Learning a modern language contributes well to their personal development and well-being through the good opportunities provided in lessons for listening and collaborative working. Pupils' behaviour in lessons was good.
- Pupils have a sound understanding of why learning a language is useful and of how it can contribute to their future employment prospects. Pupils' intercultural understanding is not as broad as it could be.

Quality of teaching and learning in ML

- Teachers use their knowledge of primary methodology well to teach Spanish. The learning objectives for the lesson are clearly spelt out at the beginning of each session and a good variety of resources is used to interest and stimulate pupils.
- Lessons are lively and interesting. The pace of learning is good. Pupils' prior knowledge is revised before new vocabulary is taught. Songs are well used to reinforce the new concepts and vocabulary learned by pupils.
- There was appropriate use of the target language by teachers. Some instructions are given in Spanish and words of praise are well used.
- Teachers' pronunciation is good. On occasion, pupils' were appropriately corrected on their pronunciation.
- Additional adults are employed very well in lessons to support pupils in their learning including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
- Lesson planning is satisfactory and draws on the external schemes of work used by the school. It does not always provide enough detail about how the needs of pupils of different abilities will be met.
- Informal assessment measures are effectively used during, and at the end of lessons, to ascertain how well pupils have learned. Work in the limited writing which pupils have completed is well marked and

mistakes are corrected. Formal assessment of the progress pupils are making is at the early stages of development. The assessment and recording of pupils' individual progress is assisted by the growing use of pupils' language portfolios which are designed to show the progress they are making in different areas of learning Spanish.

- Teachers use information and communications technology, such as interactive whiteboards, well to teach new vocabulary to pupils and to teach songs which reinforce new learning. 'Tin lid' recording devices are also used in activities to test and extend pupils' listening skills and knowledge but their low volume levels make it difficult at times for all pupils to hear what is recorded on them.

Quality of curriculum

- Spanish is learned by all pupils in Key Stage 2. Pupils with specific learning difficulties who are mainly taught in a separate unit are included in lessons where it is appropriate to do so. Pupils in younger classes, where modern languages are not formally taught, learn key phrases in Spanish. The class registration process is well used to enable pupils to give brief answers in Spanish.
- The model chosen for the delivery of Spanish is effective. Class teachers deliver Spanish which allows for reinforcement of learning outside discrete lessons. Good provision has been made to continue the teaching of Spanish in one class where the teacher is unavoidably absent.
- The time allocated for Spanish for each class is appropriate. Each class receives a weekly lesson of 30 minutes with regular reinforcement sessions throughout the week.
- A good scheme of work, drawn up by the school, is supplemented by two commercial schemes. These meet the needs of learners and provide clear guidance for staff in what to teach so that pupils make good progress.
- A successful 'language day' was recently held on the theme of Spain and all pupils, including those in the unit for pupils with specific learning difficulties, took part in a variety of creative activities. Native speakers have also visited the school. Further enrichment for the curriculum is provided by a German club.
- Good displays in all classes and around the school, support pupils' learning of Spanish and promote their intercultural understanding. Those in classes in Key Stage 2 contain a good range of useful phrases and key words such as numbers, colours, days of the week and months of the year.

Leadership and management of ML

- The introduction of Spanish has been well supported by the senior leadership team and the governing body. It is included in the school development plan and appropriate financial resources have been spent

to purchase resources, assessment materials for pupils and schemes of work.

- The introduction of Spanish has been well planned and well-led by the subject leader. Good arrangements have also been made to enable the teaching of Spanish to continue in the event of a teacher's absence.
- The subject leader has taken part in training for leadership of the subject. There are plans for class teachers to attend training by the local authority in the next academic year.
- There is a good and clear development plan which details how pupils' entitlement to learn a language by 2010 will be met and how this will be sustained. The school is on course to have sufficient teachers to ensure the sustainability of modern languages' teaching in Key Stage 2.
- Links have been developed with the main secondary schools to which pupils transfer. Informal assessment information on pupils' abilities in modern languages has been provided to one school. There are appropriate plans to enable pupils' language portfolios, with their assessment information, to be made available to receiving secondary schools.
- Formal monitoring and self-evaluation of the effectiveness of teaching and learning in modern languages is at an early stage of development.

Implementing languages entitlement

- The rationale for introducing primary languages is effective.
- The senior leadership team and the staff are highly committed to the teaching of a modern language.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes towards learning modern languages. Both boys and girls are well motivated.
- There is an effective model of delivery which enables all pupils in Key Stage 2 to receive regular lessons in Spanish.
- Arrangements for the sustainability of modern languages are very good.
- Teaching and learning are good, particularly in the areas of speaking and listening where pupils make good progress.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in reading and writing
- developing further the school's monitoring and self-evaluation in modern foreign languages
- developing the formal assessment and recording of pupils' progress in the different areas of learning.

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

Michael McIlroy
Her Majesty's Inspector