

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

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



03 June 2009

Mr S Bentham
Headteacher
St Luke's CofE Primary School
Queen's Park Road
Heywood
Lancashire
OL10 4XB

Dear Mr Bentham

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 11 May 2009 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 two lessons.

Context

French was taught intermittently in several classes from September 2007 by specialist teachers. Since January 2009 it has been taught by class teachers in all classes in Key Stage 2.

Achievement

- The progress made by pupils in lessons observed was satisfactory.
- All classes in Key Stage 2 have begun learning French from the same starting point in January 2009 which was a new departure for the school following the loss of previous arrangements for teaching French.

Older pupils are appropriately further advanced in their learning than those in Years 3 and 4, which reflects their greater maturity.

- Pupils are developing a sound and sometimes good understanding of French grammar and are building up their vocabulary. Some are able to construct simple sentences, such as 'j'ai un lapin' and some are able to combine adjectives with nouns. Pupils are developing an awareness of gender and know, for example, that nouns can be preceded by 'le' or 'la.' They have some awareness of plural endings and that accents change the sounds of words.
- Pupils' speaking skills are satisfactory as is their pronunciation, although their confidence in speaking varies. Pupils generally listen well in class to instructions and to how new vocabulary is pronounced.
- Pupils' skills in reading are developing satisfactorily. They read French from the interactive whiteboards, worksheets, flashcards and displays.
- Pupils have limited opportunities for writing. Written work largely consists of completing worksheets. There are some opportunities for pupils to copy-write sentences in French.
- Learners have a sound understanding of how languages can be useful to their future studies and careers. They know it will be useful for their secondary school studies and could name a number of jobs in which languages are used, such as translating and being a pilot. One pupil said that languages 'help you to get to know other people in the world'.
- Pupils' intercultural understanding is developing satisfactorily. They could name Canada and Luxembourg as countries where French is spoken, some foods found in France, some of the main tourist sights in Paris and the colours of the French flag. One pupil was able to explain that France had presented the Statue of Liberty to the United States of America.
- Pupils enjoy learning French and cited the different activities and games they undertake in lessons. Learning languages makes a satisfactory contribution to their personal development and well-being.

Quality of teaching and learning in ML

- There is satisfactory and sometimes good use of the target language in lessons. In one class, pupils were greeted in French at the start of the lesson and instructions and some praise words were used during it.
- Teachers draw appropriately on their knowledge of primary methodology and assessment techniques, in French lessons. However, some activities were too long which resulted in some pupils losing interest. Sessions at the end of lessons did not always ensure that new learning was well embedded.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is satisfactory. Pronunciation is occasionally weak but this should improve with practice.
- In lessons observed, teachers drew on some language learning strategies to help pupils with constructing simple sentences.

- Planning includes the key elements of lessons and is logical and sequential. Planning does not always make clear how additional adults will be used and how the needs of pupils of differing abilities will be met.
- ICT is used satisfactorily. It is used to introduce new vocabulary, to enable pupils to hear French spoken by native speakers and to play action songs. There is scope to make greater use of available ICT programs to enliven lessons and stimulate learning.
- Additional adults are used satisfactorily. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are included and supported well in lessons.
- Pupils' books are marked but there is little evidence of more able pupils being given more challenging work.
- Some good links have been established between French and other subjects. For example a display on the healthy eating of fruit and vegetables was supported by labels in French, such as "cinq par jour."
- Pupils are generally keen and eager to learn, to answer questions and participate in games and other activities.

Quality of curriculum

- The newly adopted curriculum model is satisfactory in its effectiveness and is proving more sustainable than previous arrangements.
- The weekly time allocated to teaching French is adequate. It ranges from 35 minutes to one hour in different classes. There is some reinforcement of French in some classes during the week, such as the taking of the register in French.
- The school has drawn up a satisfactory scheme of work that identifies the key elements of weekly lessons to be taught in classes. It draws on the Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages and is supported by two commercial schemes.
- Lessons, such as one observed where pupils learnt the names of pets, meet learners' interests and their language learning needs.
- There are few extra-curricular activities that enrich and extend pupils' learning of languages. Some opportunities exist outside of lessons for pupils to ask teachers for support or clarification about what they have learnt in lessons.
- The resources available for teaching French are limited. The library contains some books about France and European countries but there is scope to increase the amount of books, magazines and comics which pupils can read and browse for leisure. Although the school is well resourced in terms of ICT, pupils themselves do not yet make use of these facilities to extend their learning of French. There is scope for teachers to make more use of online resources in the teaching of French.
- In each class in which French is taught there are useful displays of key words and recently taught vocabulary. Pupils spoken to considered these helpful. Some displays highlight aspects of intercultural understanding, such as pictures of leading French figures such as

Napoleon and President Sarkozy, maps of France and pictures of popular tourist sights, such as the Arc d'Triomphe.

- There are some opportunities to enable pupils to be creative in their learning. In one class, pupils' knowledge of vocabulary about foodstuffs is being drawn upon successfully to make a set of creative displays of French shop windows.

Leadership and management of ML

- You are very supportive in ensuring that language teaching is maintained in the school. Since joining the school recently you have successfully guided it towards a more sustainable model of delivery that ensures that all pupils in Key Stage 2 now receive their entitlement of a weekly lesson.
- Leadership of ML is satisfactory. The subject leader has drawn up a scheme of work for the current year and a policy for the teaching of languages has been adopted. In the subject leader's unavoidable absence, you coordinate the subject and have drawn up an accurate evaluation of the subject's effectiveness. An appropriate plan of action for the subject has been prepared for the new school improvement plan and there are apt plans to use specialist teachers and an online training course to develop the skills of classroom teachers.
- Assessment procedures to track the progress of pupils have recently been introduced which will be passed to the secondary schools to which pupils transfer. Monitoring and evaluation of the teaching and learning of languages is at an early stage of development.
- Useful links have been established with a local primary school network that supports languages and with one secondary school to which pupils transfer.

Implementing languages entitlement

- Implementing entitlement is satisfactory
- The rationale for learning French is well-founded. It takes into account the skills of teachers and the availability of specialist support.
- Since January 2009, French is taught in all classes in Key Stage 2.
- Reading and particularly writing are not yet well developed.
- Senior leadership is supportive of languages learning and its development, which is reflected in the draft action plan of the new school development plan.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- developing teachers' subject knowledge
- expanding the resources available for the teaching of French, including online resources for ICT
- developing more opportunities for writing and opportunities for pupils to read for pleasure

- developing monitoring and assessment procedures.

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