

Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404040  
F 020 7421 6855  
[enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



03 June 2009

Mr A Laskey  
Headteacher  
St Thomas Moorside CofE VA Primary School  
Coleridge Road  
Sholver  
Oldham, Lancashire  
OL1 4RL

Dear Mr Laskey

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 13 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 three lessons and part of a music lesson.

#### Context

Spanish has been taught formally in all classes in the school since the start of the summer term in 2009.

#### Achievement

- The progress made by pupils in lessons observed was satisfactory and some was good.
- Pupils are developing a sound understanding of the basic vocabulary of numbers, greetings and colours.

- Pupils in Key Stage 2 are able to ask and answer several simple sentences, such as 'What is your name?' Their pronunciation is satisfactory.
- The listening skills of pupils are developing well.
- Reading and writing are at a very early stage of development.
- Pupils have some understanding of basic grammar, such as how questions marks are written in Spanish.
- Pupils' awareness of how languages can assist their future studies and work opportunities is satisfactory. They know it may be studied at secondary school and that it could be of use in careers such as translating and tourism and if they are visiting Spain.
- Pupils' intercultural understanding is at a very early stage of development. Pupils know that Spanish is also spoken in Spain and Mexico but are less clear about where else in the world it is spoken.
- Learning Spanish is making a good contribution to pupils' personal development and well-being. They enjoy learning Spanish and cited the different games and activities they undertook.

#### Quality of teaching and learning in ML

- Teaching assistants draw satisfactorily on their knowledge of primary methodology in lessons to develop pupils' learning. In one class, good use was made of drama to model simple conversations in Spanish. On occasion, opportunities for pupils to practise speaking are not fully exploited.
- In some classes, there is good use of the target language by the staff with introductions, greetings and use of praise words. There is scope to develop further the use of the target language in lessons.
- Teaching assistants' subject knowledge and pronunciation are satisfactory, although occasionally some pronunciation is weak. This will improve with practice and training.
- Planning is good and follows the school's format. It sets out logically how lessons will progress. However, it does not always take into account the differing abilities of pupils, such as the more able.
- Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well included and supported by additional adults in classes. This enables them to make progress at the same rate as other pupils.
- Sessions at the end of lessons do not always ensure that new learning is fully reinforced and embedded.
- There is some good use of sound spelling links. In one lesson, a class teacher assisting with the lesson emphasized how the consonants 'll' are pronounced in Spanish and illustrated this by writing the word 'llamo' on a whiteboard for pupils to see.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) was generally well used in lessons observed to introduce new vocabulary. In a Year 1 lesson, pupils were able to interact with the electronic whiteboard to match colours with their correct Spanish names. In another lesson, ICT

enabled pupils to hear new phrases and questions several times. Pupils also reported that they had looked at some online dictionaries.

- Pupils' knowledge about language is developing well. In two lessons there was discussion about how question marks are written in Spanish.
- Pupils behaved well in lessons observed, listened well and were keen to answer questions.

### Quality of curriculum

- The curriculum model recently adopted by the school of using teaching assistants to deliver Spanish is effective. Spanish is taught during teachers' non-contact time in all year groups, although Year 6 pupils have only very recently began to study it.
- The time allocated to Spanish is appropriate. Weekly lessons are 30 minutes in length and there is some reinforcement during the week, for example, in the taking of the register.
- The scheme of work used by the school is appropriate and reflects the five headings of the in the Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages. The topics that it covers meet the needs and interests of pupils.
- Pupils have opportunities to listen to native speakers on DVDs. In one lesson in a Year 3/4 class pupils watched and listened to a recoding of native speakers asking '¿Qué tal?'
- Pupils have satisfactory opportunities to read from flashcards, displays, some worksheets and from interactive whiteboards. They have, as yet, few opportunities to read or browse books, comics, magazines or newspapers for pleasure.
- Pupils have opportunities to listen to native speakers on DVDs. In one lesson in a Year 3/4 class pupils watched and listened to a recoding of native speakers asking '¿Qué tal?'
- Pupils have satisfactory opportunities to read from flashcards, displays, some worksheets and from interactive whiteboards. They have, as yet, few opportunities to read or browse books, comics, magazines or newspapers for pleasure.
- The curriculum has been enriched by a Spanish Day in the previous academic year where pupils tasted Spanish foods, observed Flamenco dancing and watched a re-enactment of a bull-fight by teachers. On a separate occasion, pupils used video-conferencing to contribute a Spanish song to a local schools' 'X Factor' competition.
- The curriculum is supported by a number of topic boxes, each of which contains appropriate ICT resources for staff use.
- There are some creative links with other subjects, such as music. In a music lesson, Year 2 pupils sang counting songs and practised the numbers one to ten in both Spanish and French. They also were introduced to some aspects of Spanish culture, such as fans and castanets.
- There are bright and colourful displays in classrooms of key vocabulary which usefully supports pupils' learning. A number of classroom objects

are also helpfully labelled in Spanish and in one classroom, pencil pots were imaginatively labelled with the names of colours in Spanish.

### Leadership and management of ML

- You and the governing body have supported the successful introduction of language learning well. Governors have participated in the school's Spanish Day and are helping fund a teachers' study visit to Spain.
- A section on modern foreign languages is included in the school development plan. The school has a clear view on how the curriculum will be developed to meet pupils' future learning entitlement in mixed year classes as they progress through the school.
- The subject leader leads her area of responsibility well. The teaching of Spanish has been successfully introduced into all year groups. Carefully planned activities, such as the Spanish Day, have stimulated pupils' interest in the language prior to its formal introduction. Appropriate training has been provided by a language specialist for all staff on the implementation of Spanish teaching. An action plan to develop Spanish and ensure the sustainability of its delivery has also been drawn up. This includes the identification of further training opportunities for staff.
- Assessment and recording procedures have been introduced into each year group. Although these do not yet follow a whole school format, the school plans to tackle this so that assessment information is more consistent.
- A bank of resources has been developed for use by staff and there are plans to augment it with a range of authentic Spanish language materials.
- Good links have been established with local primary school networks and there are plans to develop links with a school in Spain. Links with secondary schools, however, are underdeveloped.
- Although planning is checked, the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning is at an early stage of development as is the school's formal self evaluation of the subject's effectiveness.

### Implementing languages entitlement

- Implementing entitlement is good.
- All pupils in all year groups now learn Spanish.
- There is a clear rationale for the school's choice of Spanish. This took into account the skills of staff and pupils' holiday experiences of foreign countries.
- ICT is used well to enhance teaching and learning.
- Pupils have positive attitudes towards learning a language. Both boys and girls are equally motivated.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- developing teaching assistants' subject knowledge and methodology, including making greater use of the target language and plenary sessions
- expanding pupils' intercultural understanding
- developing opportunities for reading, including for pleasure, and for writing
- developing links with 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

Michael McIlroy  
Her Majesty's Inspector