

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

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



26 June 2009

Mrs J Buckland
Headteacher
Kingsholm C of E Primary School
Guinea Street
Gloucester
Gloucestershire
GL1 3BN

Dear Mrs Buckland

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 10 June 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, observation of three lessons and a 'shake and wake' session.

Context

The school began teaching ML in 2005 and pupils in different year groups learned French, Spanish or German. Currently, pupils in Year 3 and Year 4 are taught French. Some classes are taught by an external specialist teacher and some by class teachers. Pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 are taught Spanish by the subject leader for ML.

Achievement

- The progress made by pupils in the lessons observed was very good overall. Pupils listen very well to their teachers; Year 6 pupils in a Spanish lesson listened attentively to a video-recording of a native

Spanish speaker. In both Spanish lessons observed pupils were able to understand extended instructions in Spanish and to translate them, when asked to do so.

- Pupils' speaking skills are well developed, particularly in Years 5 and 6, which reflects their maturity. They can name numbers, colours, names of animals and greetings. In a meeting with an inspector, two older pupils spontaneously and eagerly held a conversation in Spanish to demonstrate their language skills. In an outstanding Year 6 lesson in Spanish, pupils videoed themselves confidently delivering a weather forecast. Pupils' pronunciation is good and sometimes very good.
- Reading skills are also developing well.
- Writing skills are less well developed as opportunities to practise these are infrequent. Nonetheless, pupils in a Year 5 Spanish lesson wrote accurate and neat answers to a short worksheet that asked about the size and colour of different animals. In the Year 6 Spanish lesson, most pupils planned their weather forecasts in short Spanish sentences.
- Pupils' understanding of basic grammar is also developing well. They understand that nouns have different genders. In one lesson, in a question and answer session using mini-whiteboards, some pupils wrote words with accents, such as 'pájaro', correctly.
- Pupils' intercultural understanding is very good. Younger pupils could name the capital city of France, the 'Promenade des Anglais' in Nice, exotic French foods and knew that the Statue of Liberty was a gift to the United States of America from France. They know that French is spoken in parts of Africa, the Caribbean and North America. They could name key landmarks in Paris and knew that French is spoken in Quebec and French Guiana. They also could name many countries in South America where Spanish is spoken, as well as Mexico and the United States. They spoke knowledgeably about Spanish festivals, could explain what tapas are and how plantains were used in cooking in South America.
- Pupils enjoy learning languages and most, particularly in Upper Key Stage 2, have very positive attitudes towards language learning. They cited the variety of activities, games, use of ICT and songs. They understand that languages are useful for travelling and working abroad and could name a number of careers, such as working for an airline and translating, where languages can be used.
- ML, in combination with the school's strong focus on international awareness, is making a very good contribution to pupils' personal well-being and development.

Quality of teaching and learning in ML

- The subject knowledge of teachers observed during the inspection is very good and pronunciation of both French and Spanish is excellent.
- There is very good use of the target language, which has contributed to pupils' good pronunciation, listening and speaking skills. New vocabulary is modelled well and pupils' pronunciation is corrected

where necessary. In a good French lesson in Year 4, pupils were given many opportunities to pronounce and repeat new vocabulary about parts of the body.

- Lesson planning is very good overall and contains appropriate reminders for teachers to check and assess learning. The pace of learning is fast and activities are usually varied and stimulating.
- Good use is made of additional adults. In one class, a teacher supported well a group of less able pupils, while a teaching assistant helped those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to make a very effective contribution to the lesson.
- ICT is well used to develop language learning. Pupils reported that they use websites to assist their language learning. In one lesson, pupils worked well in pairs to video their delivery of a weather forecast in Spanish. They then watched other pupils' videos on computers and assessed their pronunciation.
- Teachers help pupils develop their language learning strategies. One teacher emphasised how learners need to use contextual clues to work out the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary.
- There are good links with other areas of the curriculum. For example, the new vocabulary about parts of the body in a Year 4 French lesson linked directly to the class's 'funny bones' health topic.
- Questioning and informal assessment is very well used to check on pupils' understanding and progress. In one lesson, pupils used the school 'traffic light' system to self assesses how well they had understood an activity about describing animals.

Quality of curriculum

- The curriculum model is effective. In choosing it, the school has considered carefully the strengths of staff, the availability of external support, needs of secondary schools and needs of the high proportion of travelling children.
- The amount of time allocated to languages is appropriate. Pupils have a 30 minute lesson each week that is reinforced by follow-up activities.
- Schemes of work have been designed by the school and take into account well the five strands of learning identified in the Key Stage 2 Framework for ML. There is an emphasis on speaking, listening and intercultural understanding but less of a focus on literacy. Topics cover subjects that engage pupils' interests.
- Learning is supported by colourful displays of key vocabulary in each classroom in Key Stage 2 as well as posters and postcards that emphasize cultural aspects of other countries.
- The curriculum is enriched by occasional clubs, such as those for German and Spanish that are held during the year. Pupils have also benefited from visits by French and Spanish native speakers and from assemblies about different countries visited by staff. A residential visit to Spain for older pupils that was linked to the theme of football took place last year.

- Teaching and learning are supported by a range of resources, such as flashcards, worksheets, number and vocabulary beanbags and CDs of songs. There are a few books in a foreign language. Consequently, there is scope to extend the range of reading material for pupils to read or browse for pleasure.
- The school's strong international links also contribute to pupils' knowledge of ML. For example, pupils reported how teachers from New Zealand taught them words and phrases in Maori.

Leadership and management of ML

- You and the senior leadership team are very supportive of ML and have enabled class teachers to observe and learn from more experienced colleagues. ML is included in the school's improvement plan and the teaching of several key staff has been monitored by the leadership team. You ensure that ML is well integrated into the school's thematic approach to the curriculum.
- ML is well led by the new subject leader who has taken over seamlessly from the previous member of staff responsible for the subject. There is an action plan for ML which is regularly evaluated. An audit of staff skills has been carried out which informs future planning for provision. Some formal self-evaluation of the effectiveness ML has taken place.
- The subject leader attends a local cluster group for teachers of primary ML and staff are kept abreast of developments in ML. There are plans for another member of staff to attend a course on developing her subject knowledge.
- There are sound transition arrangements for when pupils move to the next stage of their education. The school has adopted a document, drawn up by local primary schools that will enable details about what pupils have studied in ML to be passed on. Pupils' overall progress in ML is reported to parents. There is scope for the school to develop more formal assessment and recording procedures of pupils' progress in the different areas of learning that can be used both within the school and by secondary schools.

Implementing languages entitlement

- Implementing entitlement is good.
- The senior leadership team is very supportive of ML.
- All pupils in Key Stage 2 are learning a ML. The rationale for teaching French and Spanish is well founded and takes into consideration the needs of a key vulnerable group of pupils.
- There is an effective model of delivery which is building up the capacity of the school to sustain the teaching of French and Spanish.
- Pupils are achieving well in speaking and listening and their attitudes to learning ML are positive.
- ICT is used well to enhance learning.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- developing opportunities for writing
- developing assessment and recoding procedures to take account of how well pupils attain in the different areas of ML
- extending reading resources, including those pupils can read for pleasure.

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