

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

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



07 July 2009

Mrs G Dorn
Headteacher
Jarrow Cross CofE Primary School
Borough Road
Jarrow
Tyne and Wear
NE32 5UW

Dear Mrs Dorn

Ofsted survey inspection programme – modern languages

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and for the help of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 11 June 2009 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 made included: interviews with staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of three lessons.

Achievement and standards

- Attainment at the end of Year 6 is low. Pupils have covered a satisfactory range of vocabulary over three or four years but their ability to recall it is poor. They are unable to construct a basic sentence using words they have learned in class. Several pupils in Year 6 expressed a hostile attitude to the way they have been taught French this year.
- Younger pupils in Key Stage 2 have covered a good range of vocabulary and retain it well. They can sing several songs in French with accuracy and confidence. They have good accents. When given the opportunity they can apply their knowledge to solve problems, for

example by doing simple arithmetic or by spelling words using the French alphabet.

- In writing, pupils copy single words neatly and accurately. In Year 4 they have learned to construct sentences to make a coherent paragraph out of words they have learned recently.
- The younger pupils have a growing knowledge of and interest in French culture.
- Most pupils greatly enjoy learning French. They behave very well in class. They believe it is important to learn a language and have some understanding of the benefits.
- Pupils work well together, for example in pair work and in supporting each other on difficult tasks.

Quality of teaching and learning in modern languages

- Lessons are well planned. They have clear and suitable objectives and a good sequence of activities to help the class meet those objectives.
- Lessons use a variety of activities, carefully designed to interest the pupils and ensure they are fully involved in the work.
- Teachers are extremely enthusiastic and this rubs off on the pupils. Relationships for the most part are very good. Teachers use praise and encouragement very effectively to build up pupils' confidence. The pupils respond well for the most part and give of their best.
- Teaching places a strong emphasis on the rules of the language. Teachers also use regular opportunities to develop pupils' understanding of French culture, for example through the use of video clips; and pupils' skills in literacy, for example by revising what an adjective is.
- Occasionally, some pupils' concentration wavers when they are expected to sit still and listen to the teacher's questions and explanations for too long.
- Teachers have worked hard to improve their own pronunciation but are still prone to making a small number of important errors.
- Pupils' progress is not yet assessed accurately and systematically.

Quality of curriculum

- Over the past few years the curriculum in French has not been planned strategically. Different classes have had varying experiences of learning the language. Only now has the school devised a plan to establish a consistent approach from Years 2 to 6.
- The subject curriculum is based on a commercial scheme of work. Teachers, however, have not covered their specified content as expected, so some elements have been omitted while others have been taught out of sequence. The school has not yet adapted this scheme to reflect its own approach to the subject, for example by indicating where different activities and resources might be used.

- Pupils in Year 6 in particular have suffered from a piecemeal approach. They recognise that work this year has not been designed well enough to ensure they make good progress. Much of the work they do is at too low a level for their age and ability.
- The time allocated for discrete teaching of the subject is limited. Although the school has plans to provide additional time for each class through different areas of the curriculum these are at an early stage of development.
- The school provides some very good enrichment activities; for example, groups of pupils have been involved in local musical and theatrical events and festivals. It also provides a popular French day every year.

Leadership and management of modern languages

- After a period of uncertainty the school now has a clear vision for the subject.
- Managers share a strong commitment to provide pupils with a valuable experience in learning French; this can be seen, for example, in the good level of resources and the detailed plans for the future.
- The action plan for the subject identifies the right priorities and suitable actions to tackle them.
- The subject leader has an accurate understanding of staff's training needs.
- Monitoring of the subject has been weak. Managers have taken too long to recognise and deal with omissions in some teachers' coverage of the curriculum and with shortcomings in the experience of the Year 6 pupils.

Implementing languages entitlement

- Despite some false starts in the past, the school is now making good progress with this initiative.
- All pupils in Key Stage 2 learn French.
- Staff's skills have been audited. Their training needs have been identified and the school has begun to meet these.
- Senior leaders have learned from past experience and understand how they might achieve a sustainable model for providing pupils with their entitlement to learning a modern language.
- The planning for transition between Key Stages 2 and 3, however, is under-developed.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- adapting the scheme of work to reflect the school's context and approach
- establishing a sustainable model for ensuring that all classes are taught a modern language by a suitable teacher

- planning better with the partner secondary school for transition to Key Stage 3.

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