

Aviation House  
125 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)



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Mrs C Fox  
Headteacher  
St Gilbert's RC Primary School  
Cambell Road  
Eccles  
Manchester  
M30 8LZ

Dear Mrs Fox

Ofsted 2009-10 subject survey inspection programme: modern languages (ML)

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 12 November 2009 look at work in ML.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the subject, the visit had a particular focus on how well the school is implementing entitlement in Key Stage 2.

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.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included interviews with staff and two groups of pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation and observation of two lessons.

#### Achievement in primary languages

- Pupils made satisfactory progress in lessons overall and some made good progress. Pupils' speaking skills are developing well. Their pronunciation is satisfactory and some is good. They know basic numbers, colours, salutations and a few key phrases. Listening skills are also beginning to develop well due to good opportunities to listen to authentic speakers.
- Reading skills are developing satisfactorily. Writing is at a very early stage of development. Older pupils complete some written homework and some record new vocabulary, although words written down are not always spelt correctly.

- Pupils' intercultural understanding is satisfactory. They know a few countries where Spanish is spoken and the names of some Spanish cities, food, footballers and artists.
- Pupils' understanding of the usefulness of languages is good. They know Spanish can be useful when travelling abroad and to help visitors to the United Kingdom. They know that knowledge of languages gives job applicants an advantage and is useful for careers in teaching, translating and the airline industry.
- Language learning makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development. Both girls and boys enjoy learning Spanish and the variety of activities in lessons. Behaviour in lessons was good.
- The needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are catered for well, although there is scope to do more to meet the needs of pupils who speak Spanish as their home language.

#### Quality of teaching of primary languages

- Class teachers' subject knowledge is satisfactory. Their pronunciation is developing. Use of the target language in lessons is satisfactory and sometimes good. Some language-learning strategies are used to explain new words.
- The skills of the language assistant are used well by teachers to model pronunciation and to explain sound-spelling links. Pupils have satisfactory and sometime good, opportunities to practise speaking new vocabulary. Their pronunciation is corrected sensitively.
- Teachers use their pedagogical skills satisfactorily to provide a range of learning activities such as bingo, games and songs. Information and communication technology is used well to enable pupils to hear native Spanish speakers. Some listening activities are too long and some plenary sessions do not fully embed new learning.
- Pupils have opportunities to read Spanish from some worksheets, the interactive whiteboard and from useful displays.

#### Quality of the curriculum in primary languages

- All pupils in Key Stage 2 learn Spanish and it is taught in Key Stage 1 and the Foundation Stage. Although some Spanish has been taught in the past, this is the first year that it has been taught systematically. All pupils cover the same topics and appropriately higher demands are made of older pupils. There is scope to accelerate the learning of younger pupils to take full account of what they have learned in previous years.
- The time devoted to languages is suitable. Learning is reinforced satisfactorily during the week, but could be planned more methodically.
- The scheme of work meets the needs of pupils and reflects the requirements of the Key Stage 2 Framework for languages. Teachers' planning draws on this and is adapted to meet pupils' needs.

- The model of delivery, namely joint teaching by class teachers and the language assistant, is effective and is preparing teachers for teaching Spanish by themselves.
- Learning is enriched by a French club, a school project to teach Spanish dancing and suitable displays in classrooms and around the school. However, there are, as yet, few Spanish language books or reading resources which pupils can browse for leisure.
- Good use is made of the skills of pupils who already speak a foreign language.

#### Effectiveness of leadership and management in primary languages

- You are highly supportive of languages learning. The rationale for teaching Spanish is well founded as it takes into account pupils' views and the curriculum provision of the secondary school to which most pupils transfer.
- Subject leadership is good. The new subject leader has attended training courses and staff have received training on how to teach effectively alongside a foreign-language assistant.
- Spanish is included in the school's development plan. There is a good subject action plan which indicates clearly how progression in learning will be maintained. A bank of useful teaching resources has been developed, including dictionaries for pupils.
- Links with a local secondary school have been established.
- Monitoring and assessment procedures are at an early stage of development.

#### Progress towards entitlement in Key Stage 2

Progress towards entitlement is satisfactory. Since the beginning of the year, all pupils in Key Stage 2 are now learning Spanish systematically. Both boys and girls have positive attitudes towards learning Spanish and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are included well in lessons. However, there is little explicit teaching of reading or writing and formal recording of pupils' progress is at a very early stage of development.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- developing opportunities for writing for older pupils and ensuring its accuracy
- using plenary sessions to assess and reinforce learning
- developing assessment and monitoring procedures.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop ML in the school.

As I explained in my previous letter, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be published on the Ofsted website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Michael McIlroy  
Her Majesty's Inspector