

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



18 March 2011

Mrs S Pollard
Headteacher
St Joseph's RC Primary School
Philip Avenue
Cleethorpes
DN35 9DL

Dear Mrs Pollard

Ofsted 2010–11 subject survey inspection programme: modern languages (ML)

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and pupils, during my visit on 7 and 8 March 2011 to look at work in 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 without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included: interviews with staff and learners; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work, observation of four lessons and a visit to the breakfast club.

Achievement in languages

- Pupils achieve well in French and Spanish, because they fulfil the school's philosophy for ML learning: to have a positive, enjoyable experience of learning a foreign language, to attach value to this, to acquire the familiarity of the sounds and to enable them to develop good pronunciation and build a core vocabulary.
- Pupils greatly enjoy learning languages. They can give reasons why it is important to do so and it contributes well to their personal and social development. They are less knowledgeable about the culture in Spanish than in French-speaking countries.
- They are able to understand French and Spanish when spoken at near normal speed. They can read aloud with good accents. Writing is given less prominence in lessons and, consequently, this is the weakest of their skills.

Quality of teaching in languages

- The specialist language teacher is a native speaker of French. As a result, pupils have an excellent model to copy. In Spanish, her subject knowledge is good. In both subjects, she uses the language being studied to manage the everyday classroom tasks. Pupils are expected to respond to simple commands and it is done in a fun way through games and mime.
- Lessons have a good assortment of activities. Pupils particularly enjoy the games and songs. Repetition drills, designed to practice new language, are sometimes poorly structured and too short. As a result, some pupils have insufficient time to internalise the new structures before being asked to use them creatively.
- Lessons include much listening and speaking, but there is less focus on reading and little on writing. The teacher's use of technology, including the interactive whiteboard and sound recordings, is excellent, but pupils make little use of computers.
- High-quality resources add to pupils' enjoyment.
- A simple but effective system of assessment, in the form of 'can do' statements, demonstrates progress well. The school is starting to track pupils' progress, but currently, it has no firm plans for transfer of information on outcomes to the secondary schools, although it is developing ML portfolios.
- Targeted support from the class teachers for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is effective in ensuring that they remain fully engaged in the lessons and make good progress. More able pupils in Year 6 have insufficient opportunities to use the language learning skills, which they developed when learning French in Years 3 and 4, to experiment with Spanish and use it creatively.

Quality of the curriculum in languages

- The scheme of work is currently being developed to take account of the recent introduction of Spanish for Years 5 and 6. Medium-term planning is satisfactory, based on the Key Stage 2 Framework. It meets the needs of pupils and contributes to their enjoyment, but does not support the development of differentiation as clearly as it could.
- There are some links with a French-speaking school in Africa, but these are only just being developed.
- The school provides some opportunities beyond the curriculum to take part in language events such as the continental breakfasts at breakfast club.
- There are limited links across the curriculum at present, but the school is aware of this. This is evident in pupils' weaker understanding of how languages can support their development in other subjects.
- Around the school, other languages are promoted well, particularly for Polish pupils, who are encouraged to take pride in their home language.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in languages

- Planning has ensured that ML has been introduced across Key Stage 2 and delivered by a specialist, but with class teachers supporting pupils in lessons, in order to develop their own skills.
- You are committed to developing languages and the philosophy for language provision is very appropriate to the needs of the school and its pupils.
- The ML policy is good. The school development plan highlights appropriate issues, but does not include the development of teaching, and especially the language skills of classroom teachers. The development of assessment is included and with appropriately high expectations to bring the subject in line with other foundation subjects.
- You undertake monitoring activities regularly, considering a good range of evidence. This includes pupils' views and direct observation of teaching.
- Governors are supportive and knowledgeable of issues in the subject.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- planning more varied and structured opportunities in lessons for repetition so that pupils are not required to move on before they are ready
- increasing opportunities for pupils to use computers to develop their writing skills and extend their intercultural understanding
- ensuring that the medium-term planning has sufficiently high levels of challenge for more able linguists to build on the good language learning strategies they develop through exposure to two languages.

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

As I explained previously, a copy of this letter will be published on the Ofsted website. It may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection. Except in the case of academies, a copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

Elaine Taylor
Her Majesty's Inspector