

MFL Learning Walk 25 Jan 2019.

A group of governors visited school to find out about teaching and learning in Foreign Languages.

What did we do?

We met Miss Elliott, Languages Co-ordinator, to talk about languages in school and to discuss our visit. The week beginning Jan 21 was a focus week for languages and Miss Elliott had drawn up a programme of activities for each year group using the story 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' in French and English. We then visited KS2 classes.

Year 3: the children were writing the days of the week in French and they were changing the fruits listed in the story to new ones.

Year 4: this class was listening to a French version of the book and exploring vocabulary and translating the French text into English.

Year 5: the children were changing the fruits listed in the story and were finding new ones by looking up the words in a French dictionary. Year 5 were writing down new words in their French vocabulary books.

Year 6: this class was changing the subject of the story to another animal eg monkey and they were writing the story in French using the past tense. They had used Book Creator. They had also read the story in French to their buddies in Reception and the reception children had read the story in English. Both stories had been recorded.

Links to Post-Ofsted Action Plan

LM3 To embed assessment systems that capture accurate information about pupils' progress and inform teachers' and leaders' planning effectively

p17 Action: Subject leaders accurately assess key skills, knowledge and understanding across all (foundation) subjects

LM5 To equip all leaders with the skills, knowledge and understanding needed to drive improvement in their areas of responsibility

p19 Action: curriculum leaders to organise a curriculum week

What did we learn?

We learned that language learning is statutory at KS2 but at OLSA nursery, reception, Year 1 and Year 2 children are exposed to French. For the focus week, nursery had learned the words for the fruit, reception had learned some colours and Years 1 and 2 had worked on a display about the story. We were also informed that Years 2 and 5 are also learning Mandarin each week as part of a DFE-funded project delivered by Newcastle School for Girls.

We also learned that the programme for French has been drawn up collaboratively with the high schools to ensure progression at Year 7.

Miss Elliott will also be leading some CPD for staff and is developing a display area for languages.

Positive comments?

We could see the progression in the tasks set for focus week e.g the older children had more challenging tasks. Year 6 were able to change the pronouns to agree with the gender of the animal they had chosen to replace the caterpillar and they were also able to use the past tense of *manger*. They were also able to use the keyboard to make their writing accurate by using accents. The children told us that they enjoyed French and the focus week. Year 5 were also very positive about learning Mandarin, were able to demonstrate what they knew and we heard that our children who speak Mandarin were very pleased to share their language with their friends. The children were very engaged with their activities and were enjoying what they were doing.

Any questions?

We asked about assessment and learned that there is no formal assessment and the work is largely focussed on spoken language skills. There is skills progression and this is on the website. We asked about the time allocation: this is 30 minutes per week but might be split into smaller blocks so children experience French on more than one occasion. Teachers might use French at different times eg in a plenary. We asked about the curriculum plans having information on French. This will be an expectation from September 2019.

Future visits

It would be very useful and interesting to visit when the children are learning Mandarin.