



USING THE NEW OFSTED FRAMEWORK TO RAISE THE PROFILE OF LANGUAGES

Thoughts arising from a presentation by Michael Wardle, National Lead for Languages, Ofsted, at Language World 2019.

Words: Steven Fawkes, ALL Honorary Membership Officer

It is clear from the words of HM Chief Inspector Amanda Spielman that the focus of inspection is now set to be closely on the curriculum, and not just the outcomes of teaching.

'Twelve years of education should give children a lot more than a disposition to learn and some ill-defined skills. Yet the evidence from the ... our research this year is that the focus on substance, on the knowledge that we want young people to acquire, is often lost...

...If their entire school experience has been designed to push them through mark-scheme hoops, rather than developing a deep body of knowledge, they will struggle in later study.'

The Association is also aware of pressures placed on curriculum time for teachers in some contexts, e.g. in Primary where a focus on English and Maths may sideline other subjects, or in Secondary where examination preparation can abbreviate the potentially rich experiences of key

stage 3 learning as encapsulated in the Purpose of Study of our National Curriculum document starting :

Learning a foreign language is a liberation from insularity and provides an opening to other cultures. A high-quality languages education should foster pupils' curiosity and deepen their understanding of the world.

If Inspectors are to look closely at curriculum, then language teachers and managers can accordingly make a strong case with school leaders for those practical things that support curriculum: appropriate timetabling, resourcing and access to CPD to support the best delivery possible through curriculum design and constructive use of assessment.

In a reassuring and thought-provoking session Michael reminded us of the essentials of teaching and learning and described the new Quality of education measure.

' This will focus on a provider's educational intent, implementation and impact. It will de-intensify the inspection focus on performance data and place more emphasis on the substance of education and what matters most to learners and practitioners.'

Intent Implementation Impact

Michael outlined Ofsted's working definition of curriculum which

...sets out the aims of a programme of education, including the knowledge and understanding to be gained at each stage (Intent)...

... translates that framework over time into a structure and narrative, within an institutional context (Implementation)...

... evaluates what knowledge and understanding pupils have gained against expectations (Impact).'

CURRICULUM:

WHAT is taught

TEACHING ACTIVITIES:

HOW curriculum content is taught

ASSESSMENT GOALS:

Desired outcomes and measures of those outcomes

This focusses the thinking of colleagues in different roles in schools: clearly Intent is in the remit of the senior and subject leaders; Implementation is particularly for subject leaders and teachers - what they choose to do in the classroom; and Impact is what Inspectors see in

the pupils and their work. Going further into things that might logically be observed, Michael outlined how Inspectors will select subjects relevant to the focus of the inspection, and observe lessons in which this subject is being taught.

An Inspector selecting languages will connect aggregated evidence from lesson observations to discussions with pupils, teachers and Heads of Department / Coordinators, pupils and with work scrutiny, to form an overall view of quality of education or behaviour and attitudes.

When judging Implementation, an Inspector's positive observations might be: Teachers have good knowledge of the subject(s) and courses they teach. Leaders provide effective support for those teaching outside their main areas of expertise.

- Teachers present subject matter clearly, promoting appropriate discussion about the subject matter being taught. They check pupils' understanding systematically, identify misconceptions accurately and provide clear, direct feedback.
- Over the course of study, teaching is designed to help pupils to remember long term the content they have been taught and to integrate new knowledge into larger ideas.
- Teachers create an environment that allows pupils to focus on learning. The textbooks and other teaching materials ... reflect the school's ambitious intentions ... and clearly support the intent of a coherently planned curriculum, sequenced towards cumulatively sufficient knowledge and skills for future learning and employment.
- The work given to pupils is demanding and matches the aims of the curriculum as above ...

Michael reassured Conference that Inspectors also bear in mind the human pressures of the curriculum, thus expecting teachers to provide differentiation, but without unnecessarily elaborate or individualised

approaches, and to identify approaches that avoid unnecessary staff workload.

ALL Members are aware that the broad issue of curriculum access for all learners has been reported as a concern in the annual Language Trends, and will be reassured that these aspects arose in Michael's session:

When judging Intent Inspectors will be looking for 'a programme of education, including the knowledge and understanding to be gained at each stage' and considering to what extent ...

- Leaders adopt or construct a curriculum that is ambitious and designed to give all pupils the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life. **This is either the national curriculum or a curriculum of comparable breadth and ambition.**
- The school's curriculum is coherently planned and sequenced
- **Pupils study the full curriculum.** In primary schools, a broad range of subjects (exemplified by the national curriculum) is taught in key stage 2 throughout each and all of Years 3 to 6. In secondary schools, the school teaches a broad range of subjects throughout Years 7 to 9.

AMBITION

A key word in Michael's session was Ambition, in all aspects of planning and expectation, but especially under Intent: 'The (secondary) school's aim is to have the EBacc at the heart of its curriculum, in line with the DfE's ambition.'

Within this aspiration the key questions for our professional consideration remain the same as ever, but with some sharpening of focus:

- What is progress ... in language learning?
- How do we effect the best transitions, not just between schools, but between years?
- How do we ensure that the Scheme of Work builds upwards, that our learners make links between what we teach them and what they already know, that they know more and remember more?
- How do we check that new language 'sticks'?

ALL Members might well choose to use some aspects of the new inspection focus to raise the profile of languages in their school, and support their senior leaders in thinking through the issues. The ALL Briefing Live Language Learning Issues in the Media from March 2019 already includes some discussion points for teachers to take up with senior colleagues in respect to various policy documents published at that time.

ALL is planning a specific Briefing on the agreed OFSTED Framework with points and questions which aim to strengthen the voice of the language teacher in negotiating and profile-raising. For example:

The Framework implies that Inspectors will be looking to see how the curriculum is designed, over time, to maximise the likelihood that children will connect the things they have been taught.

- How can we work, together and with colleagues in linked schools, to ensure that timetabling for language learning is adequate and appropriate?
- How can we work together on progression and planning for the students' future?
- How do we ensure that teachers have good levels of linguistic ability? What support might be offered for non-specialists at KS2?
- What is the school doing to increase the proportion of pupils that study MFL at KS4?

ALL looks forward to the new Framework being settled, allowing members to address those professional matters they can do something about, and to raise vocally the larger issues which are not within their control, but are of great importance to us all.