Languages Curriculum

If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head.
If you talk to him in his own language, that goes to his heart.
Nelson Mandela

Through language teaching we aim to develop a genuine interest and positive curiosity about foreign languages, finding them enjoyable and stimulating.

Learning a second language offers pupils the opportunity to explore relationships between language, allowing them to develop a deeper understanding of culture and globalisation. At our school, we teach French.

We teach language throughout the school. We start in Reception to ensure pupils develop a solid understanding with which to build on throughout the Key Stages. We intend that all pupils become life-long learners of language. We recognise the importance of learning a foreign language in order to improve pupils' opportunities in later life, both culturally and economically.

We believe that learning an additional language supports pupils in exploring and developing their first language. This supports pupil understanding of diversity, both locally and globally. It also broadens pupils' knowledge of their own and others' cultures – celebrating difference.

Our curriculum is progressive, inclusive and builds upon prior learning. It ensures that pupils are able to meet and exceed the objectives and aims outlined in the National Curriculum. The curriculum design has opportunities to regularly revisit and revise content to ensure that it becomes embedded.

It has been adapted and developed based on up-to-date research carried out on the delivery of languages. Content has been sequenced in small steps to ensure pupils can handle and commit learning to long-term memory.

Early Language Development

In preparation for acquiring deeper understanding of a foreign language, considering the three pillars of phonics, vocabulary and grammar, we begin exposing and at times immersing pupils in early language learning, through high frequency words, in Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. This ensures that pupils have a good recognition of the French sounds/phonemes before entering Key Stage 2. This is delivered through the use of songs, rhymes and simple, familiar stories. Content is selected to ensure that all phonemes needing to be learnt in Key Stage 2, have been heard and said by pupils without graphical representations. This includes learning how to recognise and say simple salutations, days of the week, three animals (dog, spider, panther), months, colours and numbers to ten (covering these, ensures that pupils have heard and practised pronouncing all twenty-six French phonemes).

Key Stage Two Language Development

In Key Stage 2, pupils build on previous learning by developing a deeper knowledge of the three pillars to language learning, where they learn to recognise, say and write french phonemes, learn broader vocabulary and begin to understand and apply grammatical rules. This is delivered in a timetabled weekly language lesson. Pupils learn phonemes with a progression route clearly mapped out across key stage two. The curriculum aims to broaden vocabulary, focusing on high frequency language that builds over time. It includes areas such as: food, animals, the body, clothing, weather and family. Pupils develop their understanding of grammar progressively across the Key Stage, starting with understanding gender of nouns and adjectives, then moving to broaden basic grammar rules, including sentences incorporating verbs, first and third person, conjunctions and prepositions. By Year 6, pupils are able to apply their learning more independently in readiness for Key Stage 3. This is developed by providing opportunities to apply language in different contexts and situations, whilst being scaffolded through the use of dictionaries and language prompts.

Pupils are explicitly taught through the four modalities of listening, speaking, reading and writing. These modalities are taught in the same sequence to ensure pupils have the underpinning spoken language that enables reading and writing including spelling, using learnt phonemes. Pupils are taught to understand French through listening and reading, whilst knowing how to produce language and respond through speaking and writing.

Language is also acquired and applied through songs, rhymes and stories, which have been mapped across Key Stage 2. These are progressive and build upon the learning outlined in the curriculum.

Cultural Development

We believe that inter-cultural understanding is essential in raising aspirations and pupils' motivation to learning a language. We also believe that teaching the cultural aspects of France, provides an additional platform to identify, debate, compare and contrast beliefs and values, such as those outlined in the British Values agenda. Learning about social traditions, such as traditional stories and festivals/celebrations, and daily life provides an opportunity to celebrate culture and diversity. These cultural aspects of learning are carefully mapped across all year groups. The delivery of these aspects, is planned into lessons, enrichment days and other elements of the school day, such as assemblies.

Cross Curricular Considerations

The curriculum has been adapted to use cross curricular links which can be used to enhance the learning of a foreign language and provide further opportunity to revisit and revise content from language lessons. Links include teaching pupils about francophone countries in geography, science (such as naming animals and scientists) French artists in art, sport in physical education and spelling rules, such as cognates in English and comprehension in reading. Languages are also used to support pupils in developing their mathematical knowledge and skills, such as simple counting in Key Stage 1, working with money and naming shapes in Key Stage 2. These links have been carefully identified and mapped across the school's curriculum, ensuring teachers can draw on them when appropriate.