

Modern Foreign Languages Curriculum Statement

2020 - 2021

Intent

At Alverton School we foster a love of language. Modern Foreign Languages is an exciting and diverse subject and, through teaching it, we aim to foster children's curiosity, knowledge, confidence and resilience in speaking different languages. This includes learning about the everyday life and culture of people living in France and Spain and developing the children's understanding of the world. Children learn to communicate with increasing confidence and fluency, finding ways of conveying what they want to say through discussion and questioning. MFL threads its way throughout school life in the classroom throughout the day and through discrete teaching.

We are committed to ensuring that competence in another language enables children to interpret, create and exchange meaning within and across cultures. We also want to help children develop skills that will open further opportunities later in life.

Following our return to school in September 2020, we have needed to respond to the enforced absence due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Initial assessments have identified priority pupils and we have timetabled additional Basic Skills sessions to allow us to focus on our identified priorities, as well as increasing the focus on "gaps" during lessons. We are focusing particularly on key skills in Reading, Writing and Maths as well as a whole-school priority of children's mental health and wellbeing.

Implementation

At Alverton, we teach Spanish in Key Stage 1 and French in Key Stage 2. Lessons are taught once a week for half an hour. French and Spanish threads its way throughout school life in the classroom throughout the day and through discrete teaching. It is revisited throughout the week during registration, greetings and when children are given instructions. French vocabulary is displayed in classrooms for children to refer back to when having a conversation.

We use a scheme of work called 'Early Start French' that provides lessons across the key stage to support the skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing. The scheme helps to develop this through:

- ensuring that our children see other real children in their everyday French and Spanish lives. This brings language lessons to life. It's about their culture and how they live, not just rules of grammar.
- children hear the language first for better pronunciation. There is a model for children to see the real native speakers on-screen using the language in context, rather than reading from a textbook page and relying on translation.
- implementing careful progression that doesn't overwhelm young learners with too much learning too soon. Each section builds on what has been learned before. Using a "primary approach" avoids repeating the way our children will learn languages in later secondary schooling.
- planning as a foundation for later language learning. We introduce basic concepts of how the language works in an age-appropriate way, aiming to teach a small amount well using images etc.
- cross-curricular links that provide opportunity to embed language in the wider curriculum.

The scheme also helps to support our non-specialist teachers. We are lucky enough to have a teacher in Key Stage 1 who speaks fluent Spanish so teachers are able to use his expertise. However Early Start gives detailed help for lesson planning in a teachers guide and provides a 'talking dictionary' which helps non-specialists become more confident in their pronunciation.

In the EYFS, children are taught welcome and goodbye songs in both English and French so they can hear the direct translation.

Following Covid-19, we have added Basic Skills sessions to our timetables. This has necessitated a small reduction in the time spent on teaching MFL but we have ensured that all children will still access a broad curriculum and have used opportunities to incorporate these subjects in, for example, reading sessions and writing opportunities.

Impact

MFL in Key Stage 2 has enabled children to develop their confidence in speaking aloud and having conversations in French with their friends and members of staff. Children's curiosity has been sparked in MFL and teachers are noticing them getting very excited about the subject by asking questions, making links and wanting to find out more. By using French and Spanish throughout the school day, a context for learning and language development is provided as well as increasing the children's understanding of different cultures.

In Key Stage 1, children enjoy and get excited about learning Spanish. By the end of the year some children are able to have a basic conversation in Spanish about themselves and their family and are curious to learn French in Key Stage 2.

The teaching of French in Key Stage 2 provides an appropriate balance of spoken and written language and lays the foundations for further foreign language teaching at Key Stage 3. As well as hearing French speaking around the school, examples of children's written work will also be displayed.

Following COVID 19 we will continue with our existing range of assessments and using 'Quizziz' to assess children long term memory of vocabulary and phrases. We will ensure in particular that regular assessment in relation to intervention ensures that these are accurately focused on the correct pupils, enabling maximum progress to be made.