

Modern Foreign Languages – Rationale and Structure

Aim

At Mithian School, we inspire to increase children's understanding and communicating with different people and cultures. We aim to foster in children an outward looking perspective on the world, and for them to see themselves as global citizens.

How is our language curriculum organised?

In the EYFS and KS1 children have opportunities to build up a basic awareness of other languages, via examples of languages used and referred to in everyday contexts, eg Registration.

French has been chosen as our studied language for Key Stage 2. This is the language taught from Year 7 in many of our local secondary schools. French is taught from years 3 to 6 in short blocks of approximately half a term in length. The emphasis is on learning about French culture, language and society in fun, child-friendly ways. We use video, songs and games to inspire and motivate. We use the primary resource "Early Start Languages", where each unit builds on the language and skills previously taught with plenty of chance to practise and consolidate. We also access Twinkl resources to support these units.

We believe that practise and revisiting key learning is vital. The children are encouraged to "have a go" rather than "get it right". Each child begins a French exercise book at the beginning of Year 3, which is passed up through the school. The main emphasis, however, remains speaking and listening throughout the school.

As we are a school with two year-groups per class, we believe it is beneficial for Year 4 and 6 children to revisit the previous year's learning as it is introduced for the first time to Years 3 and 5. Extension activities, if judged appropriate by the class teacher, might consist of more emphasis on the written element of each unit.

Due to Covid disruption, we are currently embarked on a programme containing much more revision in Years 5 and 6. The MFL coordinator is monitoring children's progression, and the programme is adapted accordingly as an ongoing process, in order to be relevant and effective for our current cohorts.

Knowledge.

Before starting a new unit, children revisit previous units to consolidate. Plenty of opportunity is given to listen and repeat new words and phrases.

Skills.

Children are given plenty of opportunity to apply what they have learnt in other contexts, for example, in pronouncing an unfamiliar sound or reusing a new word in several role-play situations. Children begin by hearing new words or structures, moving on to understanding, responding then finally being understood themselves.

Vocabulary.

Vocabulary acquisition is built up gradually and naturally, as set out in the Early Start unit progression.

Pronunciation.

Pronunciation is taught explicitly as part of each lesson. In each lesson, children watch short clips of French children their age using the key vocabulary and grammar in fun, relatable contexts. The

teacher discusses key elements of French pronunciation as they occur. This is ongoing throughout the programme, with links made to pronunciations they have already learnt.

Written Work.

Children progress from games and activities where they recognise written French (and hence spellings and structures are reinforced) to writing words, phrases and sentences. As stated above, the class teachers can add more emphasis on the written element for each unit for Year 4 and Year 6, as appropriate.

SEN.

A range of adaptations are made in lessons to ensure that French sessions are accessible to all of our children. Please see the link below.

Pupil voice

The French coordinator meets with pupils at the end of each year to gather feedback from pupils about their experiences of learning French.

What are the inspirations for our French curriculum?

We use Early Start French which is, “designed to help the primary classroom teacher introduce young learners to the language and everyday life of France. The emphasis is on laying a solid foundation for further language learning, so that children can start to understand when listening and reading simple language, and work from the outset to be able to speak and write too when the context is familiar.”

<https://www.earlystartonline.com/french1-des.html>