



C of E Primary School

Modern Foreign Languages Policy (MFL)

January 2011

Aims and Objectives

At Surrey Hills C of E Primary School, we support the view that learning a modern foreign language is an entitlement for all pupils during their time at the school, starting in Year 1. We are committed to the principle that learning another language (French) is appropriate for all children, whatever their ability, disability or special needs and we believe that many children really enjoy learning to speak another language. We also consider that the early acquisition of a foreign language facilitates the learning of other foreign languages later in life.

Our main objective in the teaching of a modern foreign language at primary school is to promote the early development of linguistic competence.

To accomplish this we aim to enable children to:

- familiarise themselves with the sounds and written form of a modern foreign language
- develop particular language-learning skills
- begin to understand a new language, and communicate in it;
- make comparisons between languages
- increase their awareness of other cultures through learning about different countries and their people, and working with materials from different countries and communities
- develop a positive attitude towards the learning of foreign languages in general
- use their knowledge of the foreign language with growing confidence, both to understand what they hear and read, and to express themselves in speech and writing.

Teaching and Learning Style

We recognise that language learning helps children through listening, speaking and interacting, to:

- learn about language (using literacy, i.e. reading and writing in the foreign language)
- learn about and compare different cultures (inter-cultural understanding).

We base the teaching on the guidance material in 'Early Start to French' in line with the Dorking Language Group of Schools, the Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages, the National Curriculum Non-Statutory Guidelines for MFL at Key

Stage 2 and the QCA Schemes of Work for MFL at Key Stage 2. We have adapted this to the context of our school and the abilities of our children.

We emphasise the listening and speaking skills over the reading and writing skills. We also use a multi-sensory and kinaesthetic approach to teaching, i.e. we try to introduce a physical element into some of the games, as we believe that this serves to reinforce memory.

A variety of techniques are used:

- games, role-play and songs (particularly action songs) help reinforce new vocabulary, along with mime and drama
- use of puppets and soft toys to demonstrate the foreign language
- listening to recordings, native speakers and using interactive ICT programmes.

We make the lessons as entertaining and enjoyable as possible, as we realise that this approach serves to develop a positive attitude in the children to the learning of modern foreign languages. We build children's confidence through constant praise for any contribution that they make in the foreign language, however tentative.

We allow for differentiation by:

- using peer support – we partner pupils of disparate ability;
- setting common tasks which are open-ended and can have a variety of responses;
- providing resources of different complexities, matched to the ability of the child.

We assess the children's progress informally during the lessons, evaluating progress against:

- AT1: Listening and responding;
- AT2: Speaking;

Organisation

We teach a foreign language to children throughout the school.

The Curriculum

French is the modern foreign language that we teach in our school at the moment, although we are looking to add another language as we grow into a Primary School with Years 5 and 6.

The curriculum that we follow is in line with the Dorking Language Group of Schools, based on Early Start French.

We teach the children to know and understand how to:

- ask and answer questions
- use correct pronunciation and intonation
- memorise words
- interpret meaning
- understand basic grammar
- use dictionaries
- work in pairs and groups to communicate in the other language
- look at life in another culture.

The Contribution of MFL to Teaching in Other Curriculum Areas

English

The learning of a modern foreign language naturally contributes to the development of our children's listening and speaking skills. It also develops the children's grasp of linguistic features such as rhyme, rhythm, stress and intonation, helps them understand the concept of register (as required for the French tu/vous distinction), and emphasises the importance of knowing the role of different word types in sentence structure.

Mathematics

Children reinforce their time-telling skills by playing time-related games in the foreign language. We play number games, too, that reinforce their counting and calculation skills, expand their understanding of date, and increase their knowledge about money.

Personal, Social and Health Education and Citizenship

One of the main benefits to the children of learning a modern foreign language at primary school level is a social one. Those children who have difficulty in reading and writing, but who have good aural skills, will often find that they excel at speaking in foreign languages. This success breeds confidence, which in turn increases self-esteem and gives them a more positive attitude to school in general.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Education

By teaching a modern foreign language, we contribute to the children's cultural education. They learn that many societies are multi-lingual. We teach them about festivals and customs related to the countries in which the language is spoken. We also give them the chance to hear stories set in the foreign culture.

Geography

We ask the children to do research on the different countries in which the particular foreign language is spoken (after they have first found them on a map or a globe). MFL pupils likewise learn about the climate of the countries in which the language is spoken.

Music

We teach children songs in the modern foreign language – both traditional and modern – which of course helps them develop a sense of rhythm and an ear for melody. We also play them classical music by composers from the countries in question (e.g. Saint-Saëns's 'Carnival of the Animals' in the case of France).

History

We teach children about significant historical figures and events in the history of the countries whose language we are studying (e.g. about William the Conqueror in the case of France).

Science

Children reinforce their knowledge of parts of the body through related games, such as a French version of 'Simon Says', or 'Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes', or through related songs, such as the French-Canadian 'Alouette'.

PE

We teach children dances from the countries in which the foreign language is spoken, e.g. 'Sur le Pont d'Avignon' in the case of France. Many of the games we use to teach children modern foreign languages are very active games that require fast reactions, e.g. French versions of 'Simon Says' and 'Grandmother's Footsteps'.

Modern Foreign Languages and ICT

We enable the children to use digital and video cameras, in order to record performances of songs, role-plays or mini-dramas. They use a variety of interactive programmes on the computer and whiteboard.

Modern Foreign Languages and Inclusion

At our school, we teach a modern foreign language to all children, whatever their ability or disability, ethnicity or culture. A modern foreign language forms part of the school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Through our modern foreign language teaching, we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make progress. We do this by setting suitable learning challenges and responding to each child's different needs. Assessment against the National Curriculum allows us to consider each child's attainment and progress against expected levels.

When progress falls significantly outside the expected range, the child may have special educational needs. Our assessment process looks at a range of factors – classroom organisation, teaching materials, teaching style, differentiation – so that we can take some additional or different action to enable the child to learn more effectively. This ensures that our teaching is matched to the child's needs.

Assessment for Learning

We assess the children in order to ensure that they make good progress in this subject. We do this informally during the lessons, and also by regular testing to evaluate what the children have learned.

To help cross-phase continuity, we include their progress in French in their record of achievement.

Older children are encouraged to make judgements about how they can improve their own and each other's work.

Resources

We have strong links with the local specialist language college which has enabled us to build up a good range of resources e.g. audio and interactive CDs; videos and DVDs; books, games and artefacts kept in the Staff Room.

Monitoring and Review

We monitor teaching and learning in the same way as we do all the other courses that we teach in the school.

The coordination and planning of the MFL curriculum are the responsibility of the subject leader and Head Teacher, who also:

- support colleagues in their teaching, by keeping informed about current developments in MFL, and providing a strategic lead and direction for this subject;
- use specially allocated regular management time to review evidence of the children's work, and to observe MFL lessons across the school.

The Head Teacher also liaises with the local primary and secondary schools, so that they are aware of the modern foreign language experience of our children when they move to the next phase of their education.

This Policy is reviewed on a regular basis as part of our ongoing Curriculum Monitoring programme, unless National initiatives deem it necessary to review it earlier. Governors will work alongside the Co-ordinator to ensure the policy is being followed to successfully deliver the planned outcomes.