

MFL Subject Position Statement

What is MFL like at St Mary's?

In Modern Foreign Languages at St Mary's we aim to develop inquisitive confident and ambitious language learners who are curious and interested in the wider world. Our pupils enjoy learning to communicate with others; developing a deeper understanding and appreciation of other foreign cultures. Our curriculum aims to develop pupils' ability to communicate confidently and coherently in the target language in speech and writing, conveying what they want to say with increasing accuracy, to express and develop thoughts and ideas spontaneously and fluently. Pupils are exposed to a wide range of authentic spoken and written material including literary texts and given the skills to be able to read, understand and deduce meaning; listen and respond to, clearly articulated, standard speech spoken at near normal speed. Through the acquisition and application of grammar and vocabulary pupils deepen their knowledge about how language works in order to creatively experiment with the foreign language and write or speak at length independently. We recognise the importance of language learning in today's modern society and provide our pupils with maximum opportunities in lessons, trips and visits to turn our pupils into real linguists; allowing them the opportunity to achieve success that opens doors to future language learning and aspirational and exciting career opportunities.

Background and makeup of the MFL department

The department is made up of a Head of Department, 3 Full-time MFL colleagues, 1 part time colleague who teaches both German and English and 1 Part-time colleague who teaches German and French. In 2023-24 KM will be on maternity cover, her timetable will be taught by CR an experienced colleague who has been Head of MFL and Assistant Head Teacher at a nearby secondary school. Pupils in Year 7 and 8 have 5 or 6 hours over the fortnight; in Year 9 pupils have 4 hours of French and 4 hours of either German or Spanish. In Year 10 there are 2 groups of French (of mixed ability) with a total number of 43 pupils; 1 group of Spanish (of mixed ability) with a total number of 22 pupils and 1 group of German (of mixed ability) with a total number of 16 pupils. In the current Year 11 there are also 2 sets of French with a total number of 27 pupils, 1 group of Spanish with 11 pupils and 1 group of German with a total number of 6 pupils. We also run an extra French GCSE group after school with a total of 10 pupils. Staffing in the department has been stable in recent years.

How the curriculum is sequenced

In Years 7 and 8 the foundations are set for the KS4 French curriculum which all pupils start working towards in Yr9. Similarly in Spanish and German (which pupils start studying in Yr9) the foundations are set in the first term of study and GCSE style work is introduced in the third term ready for the GCSE course in Yr10.

The courses taught in all years are designed to gradually cover key grammatical constructions, which are periodically revisited, so that knowledge is retained fully. The acquisition of grammatical structures underpins the topic based development of the language. The curriculum is designed so that topic areas covered in KS3 in all languages are then revisited and expanded upon at KS4. The curriculum is designed in this way in order for pupils to access the work seamlessly at KS4 and ensure that they are able to make fast, effective and sustainable progress. Similarly, the grammar structures covered at KS3 provide the foundation for those at KS4, again enabling pupils to develop their understanding of key structures whilst knowing the key aspects of each construction well.

How pupils are assessed

In languages, we assess pupil's progress formatively in lessons following all activities, this is through a variety ways – questioning, pupils performing speaking tasks, and in smaller listening and reading tasks teachers use various strategies to gauge how well tasks have been understood immediately after each activity and alter teaching approach accordingly. Formative assessment also occurs through homework when pupils demonstrate the ability to apply their knowledge and understanding more independently. If necessary, subsequent lessons are adapted to respond fully to any misconceptions.

In languages we summatively measure the impact of the curriculum at the end of each unit with tests which are marked using agreed mark schemes. Over the course of the year, all the skills of listening, reading, writing and speaking are assessed. The results from the end of unit tests are averaged in order to produce a full picture of each pupil's progress. This progress is measured and compared to pupil's end of year target grades and at KS3, which in turn informs next steps for learning if any gaps are identified.

Approaches to pedagogy (Teaching and Learning)

- Teachers within the MFL Department have a passion and excellent subject knowledge
- Two members of the department are examiners for GCSE AQA and share expertise to aid student's exam preparation.
- Teachers provide a safe, engaging environment for learning through classroom management.
- Teachers blend all four language skills into lessons and teach using the target language where appropriate to ensure maximum language immersion
- All lessons include elements of interleaving and retrieval to enable learners to reflect on what they have learnt.
- Teachers mark and check learning and understanding, identify misconceptions accurately and provide clear, direct feedback. Teachers respond and adapt their teaching as necessary.
- Teachers ensure that all lessons are fully differentiated to ensure that the most able are stretched and challenged and the less able are fully supported in their learning.
- Assessment is focused on speaking, reading and writing, skills which are learnt, practised and embedded into language lesson routine.
- Teachers have high expectations of all students to ensure pupils are independent learners who take pride in their work

Wider enrichment and cultural capital opportunities in MFL

In all language lessons, we build a strong cultural capital through underpinning the teaching of the language with key aspects of the country's geography and culture. We do this, amongst others, through exploring the country's festivals, traditions, geographical features and key differences with England.

In addition, to back up learning in the classroom trips to the **Opal Coast (Yr7)**, **Paris (KS4)** and the **German Christmas Market** take place each year, during which pupils practice key transactional language and are exposed to further French language and culture.