

Foreign Language Rationale

National Curriculum Aims, Purpose and Expectations for MFL (Modern Foreign Languages):

Learning a foreign language is a liberation from insularity and provides an opening to other cultures. A high-quality languages education should foster pupils' curiosity and deepen their understanding of the world. The teaching should enable pupils to express their ideas and thoughts in another language and to understand and respond to its speakers, both in speech and in writing. It should also provide opportunities for them to communicate for practical purposes, learn new ways of thinking and read great literature in the original language. Language teaching should provide the foundation for learning further languages, equipping pupils to study and work in other countries.

The National Curriculum aim is to enable children to:

- Understand and respond to spoken and written language from a variety of authentic sources
- Speak with increasing confidence, fluency and spontaneity, finding ways of communicating what they want to say, including through discussion and asking questions, and continually improving the accuracy of their pronunciation and intonation
- Can write at varying length, for different purposes and audiences, using the variety of grammatical structures that they have learnt
- Discover and develop an appreciation of a range of writing in the language studied.

Primary foreign language helps children to:

- Build foundations for future study of a language.
- Develop an understanding of how a language is structured grammatically.
- Gain a wider vocabulary of everyday words and phrases in French.
- Develop a knowledge and respect of a different culture to their own.

Whilst the teaching of a foreign language does not formally begin until KS2, many of the principles and skills needed to learn to speak, read and understand a language are taught from Early Years and KS1. From the beginning of their school life, the children are taught to associate letters with sounds in order to both read and write. They are also taught to listen to the sounds that can be heard and find the corresponding letters. They widen their own vocabulary through searching for new words and meanings and deciding how and when it should be used. As they move through KS1, they learn that a language has grammar rules that need to be followed in order to understand and use it properly. These same skills can be applied as they reach KS2 and begin to learn French. They will start to notice the similarities and differences between the languages and apply the early reading skills they have to learning new sounds in French.

Federation of Skelton Newby Hall and Sharow C of E Primary Schools' MFL Rationale

The study of French at our schools provides the foundations for and develops the skills required to continue learning a foreign language through the rest of their school career. As the forms and means of communicating worldwide continue to develop and improve, the skill of being able to speak another language will prove to be an advantage in many future employment opportunities.

In addition to this, children are able to gain knowledge of how language works and can explore the similarities and differences between their own language and another. It raises their awareness of the multicultural world that we live in and gives them an insight into a culture that is different to their own.

Our foreign language curriculum also has strong links to the development of British Values within the children of our school. It develops tolerance and respect of a culture and beliefs that might be different to their own, and provides the opportunity to explore what it means to be a global citizen by widening their view of the world beyond their immediate locality.

The decision to teach French as the foreign language in our schools took into account the MFL foci of other local primary and secondary schools in North Yorkshire, which showed that:

- Children in KS3 at all local secondary schools study French.
- Most primaries were already or were planning to teach French (therefore meaning most children would be starting KS3 with a similar level of knowledge).
- North Yorkshire were producing a scheme and resources to support the teaching of French at KS2. (Although we benefit from having a peripatetic languages teacher currently, it is important that, if the situation were to change, staff would benefit from the support of a scheme that is used by many other local schools.)

By the time the children reach the end of Year 6, they have secure foundations in vocabulary, grammar and written skills that will support them in continuing their study of French at KS3. They will be able to hold a conversation in French about the areas they have learnt about such as colours, food, hobbies, towns and greetings. Their vocabulary will include a range of adjectives and verbs that can be widely applied between topics. They will be able to express personal preference in the target language, and they will be able to ask questions to someone else and understand the response, in order to gain information about them. This will also be reflected in their written work, in which they will be able to construct simple sentences that show consideration of the grammatical changes that are required in French, such as syntactical arrangements, and the changes to a word necessary for subject agreement (masculine/feminine/plural).