



Languages Policy

Last updated by subject leader

September 2021

**Last reviewed by Principal and
Headteacher**

September 2021

Next review due

September 2022

Overview

Our international ethos has been established throughout the school over a number of years. After submitting in July 2021 an International School Award Evaluation Form, explaining our international work, which is firmly embedded in our curriculum, St John's Preparatory and Senior School has received the accreditation of the International School Award by the British Council on 1st September 2021.

At St. John's Preparatory and Senior School, we support the view that learning a modern foreign language is an entitlement for all pupils the moment they enter the Reception year for French and Year 3 for Spanish; pupils study both languages up to Year 6. Then, pupils continue to learn French in First Form up to A Level, start German in Second Form up to A level and Latin in Third Form up to GCSE. In addition, Mandarin is taught at A level for overseas students.

At the Preparatory School, each class has a timetabled lesson of 50 minutes per week per year group in French and Spanish. At the Senior School, First, Second and Third Forms have two periods of 50 minutes and three periods for GCSE in each language and five periods at A level in French and German. Chinese Sixth Formers have two periods a week in Mandarin.

The department is led by Mrs. Virginie Hopp, Head of Languages, who is fully qualified with a Master's Degree in Foreign Languages and a Bachelor degree in French Literature with a P.G.C.E in secondary education (French and Spanish). She is supported by six fully qualified teachers: all teachers are native speakers with a First degree, five of them with a P.G.C.E or a teaching certificate in primary or secondary. At the Preparatory School, French and Spanish are taught by the native language specialists and are therefore reliant on one key member of staff for each language. At the Senior School, French and German are taught by one or two native speakers (team teaching in some year groups). Mandarin is delivered by a native speaker teacher and Latin by one teacher, who is a Classics specialist.

Teachers have regular professional development training, linked to their subject, online / face to face and via their Head of Languages, who also disseminates learning from the exam preparation courses in Departmental meetings. Sharing outstanding practice, resources and peer observations are all encouraged and regularly undertaken.

The Head of department teaches F3 French at the Prep. School one lesson every week to support the effective transition and liaises fortnightly with both Prep. School teachers. Grammar, spelling, pronunciation and the four language skills are reinforced, as key transition skills. F3 children demonstrate their progress in their exercise books and their subject booklets, when they progress to the Senior School. Every child has an End of Year report at the end of KS2, as a record of achievement, which Senior School teachers use to support their planning.

The Department of Languages supports learning from KS1 at the Prep. School to GCSE and A Level at the Senior School. St. John's School's approach to language teaching and learning is in line with the aims of the National Curriculum and the requirements outlined in the Department for Education Languages Programme of Study for Key Stage 2. For Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5, teachers ensure coverage of the NC aims, as well as the qualification specification requirements.

The National Curriculum for languages aims to ensure that all pupils:

- 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 authentic writing in the language studied.

We are committed to the principle that learning another language is appropriate for all pupils, whatever their ability or special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Teachers plan their lessons, using detailed schemes of work. These are agreed on an annual basis with the Head of Languages.

Intent

Our main objective in the teaching of modern foreign languages at Prep. School age is to promote the early development of linguistic competence. We believe that to accomplish this, teachers should help pupils to do all of the following:

- 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
- learn about different countries and their people, thus increasing their awareness of other cultures
- 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
- acquire through all the above, a sound basis for further study at Key Stage 3 and beyond.

By the end of key stage 2, pupils should be able to:

1. Listen attentively to spoken language and show understanding by joining in and responding.
2. Explore the patterns and sounds of the language through songs and rhymes and link the spelling, sound and meaning of words.
3. Engage in conversations; ask and answer questions; express opinions and respond to those of others; seek clarification and help.
4. Speak in sentences, using familiar vocabulary, phrases and basic language structures.
5. Develop accurate pronunciation and intonation so that others understand when they are reading aloud or using familiar words and phrases.

6. Present ideas and information orally to a range of audiences.
7. Read carefully and show understanding of words, phrases and simple writing.
8. Appreciate stories, songs, poems and rhymes in the language.
9. Broaden their vocabulary and develop their ability to understand new words that are introduced into familiar written material, including through using a dictionary.
10. Write phrases from memory, and adapt these to create new sentences, to express ideas clearly.
11. Describe people, places, things and actions orally and in writing.
12. Understand basic grammar appropriate to the language being studied, including (where relevant): feminine, masculine and neuter forms and the conjugation of high-frequency verbs; key features and patterns of the language; how to apply these, for instance, to build sentences; and how these differ from or are similar to English.

At the Senior School, teachers follow the National Curriculum and develop the four language skills through a logical progression of learning, embedded in the detailed annual schemes of work. They prepare pupils in GCSE and students in A level in French and German according to AQA specifications. In Latin, GCSE pupils study the subject according to OCR requirements and in Mandarin A level, students are prepared for their exams, following Edexcel's specification.

Teachers have a communicative approach and a strong emphasis on grammar and translations. Language skills are developed and consolidated through topic learning and knowledge is enhanced across themes of studies, following detailed yearly schemes of work, showing continuity and progression in the grammatical concepts and vocabulary complexity. Topics are revisited and taught using a wider range of opinions and complex structures and tenses, according to the year group.

The curriculum is planned to facilitate sequential, progressive learning and to build upon pupils' prior knowledge in preparation for KS3 listening, reading, writing, speaking and translation skills, GCSE and A level exam tasks.

In Latin, pupils study texts and stories to build knowledge and understanding of vocabulary and syntax. Pupils are required to translate an unseen passage in Latin. They have to demonstrate their ability to understand and respond to unseen passages. They have to explain and recognise syntax. In Latin Literature, pupils should be able to identify, explain and respond to the use of common literary effects appropriate to the set text studied and the impact on the reader. Pupils have to show their understanding of the cultural, historical and literary context in which the Literature was written. They must select and analyse the evidence and draw informed conclusions.

Implementation

The lessons are designed to motivate, captivate and interest pupils. They have clear, achievable objectives and incorporate different learning styles.

At the Prep. School, French and Spanish lessons include a variety of techniques to encourage pupils to engage actively in the modern foreign language:

- PowerPoint and interactive whiteboard materials
- Interactive games (which pupils can access from home to consolidate their learning)
- Games, stories, rhymes, role-plays and songs
- Use of puppets and soft toys to demonstrate the foreign language with the younger children
- Use of mime and flashcards to accompany new vocabulary without translation
- Native speaking videos to expose children to a variety of voices in the foreign language
- Differentiated desk-based consolidation activities
- Worksheets are provided throughout each teaching unit and can be used in class or can be sent home to be completed as a homework exercise

Each lesson focuses on a combination of the five key language learning skills (speaking, listening, reading, writing and grammar).

Teachers also recognise that pupils should be encouraged to apply knowledge already learned to a specific task like writing a pen-friend letter or a presentation to our partner school pupils at the end of some topics such as describing where they live, school life, traditions, holidays, etc. This is done in collaboration with the partner schools so that the curriculum can be planned in advance.

Teachers aim to equip children with strategies for language learning that they can use in the future when studying another foreign language.

Teachers concentrate in the listening and speaking skills at Key Stage 1. They maintain a strong emphasis on the listening and speaking skills throughout Key Stage 2, whilst introducing and developing both reading and writing skills.

Learning another language presents opportunities for the reinforcement of knowledge, skills and understanding in other curriculum areas. An understanding of the structure of the new language enhances the pupils' understanding of their own language and so links closely to the Literacy curriculum. There are also opportunities to link to PSHE and citizenship, geography and RE curricula, in terms of the development of positive attitudes towards and knowledge of other cultures and countries.

Teachers assess pupils' progress informally during lessons, evaluating progress against the four National Curriculum Attainment Targets of:

AT1: Listening and responding

AT2: Speaking

AT3: Reading and responding

AT4: Writing

They also assess pupils with a written assessment at the end of every term at Key Stage 2. This is a more detailed skills-based assessment using bespoke worksheets. This form of assessment enables them to determine the learning and progression of all pupils in the key language learning skills as well as monitoring their progress against the 12 attainment targets stipulated in the DfE Languages Programme of Study for Key Stage 2.

Assessments mapped against the Language Ladder allow teachers to consider each pupil's attainment and progress against expected grades for their listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. At Key Stage 2, pupils will be expected by the end of year to reach Grade 1 for Year 3, Grade 2 for Year 4, Grade 3 for Year 5 and Grade 4 for Year 6. Depending on their previous experience or/and hard work, some pupils might be working at a lower or higher grade than expected.

At the Senior School, pupils have opportunities to ask questions on the language and grammatical rules, which are explained by the teachers in lessons. Whole class discussions take place and individual feedback is given in class and in weekly marked homework, with written specific targets.

Teachers allow for differentiation by:

- using peer support – partnering pupils of disparate ability
- setting common tasks, which are open-ended with different lengths and complexity
- providing resources of various complexity, matched to the ability of the pupil
- extra written and individual support provided

Extension activities are planned and used to stretch the most able pupils.

Teachers enable pupils to assess their knowledge via a wide range of language activities:

- Reading comprehension tasks, such as gap fill in exercise, answering questions in English and in the target language
- Listening tasks by answering questions in the target language and in English, completing information tables, drawing conclusions about opinions and giving reasons
- Essay writing in class and for homework set
- Class work or homework set in pupils' grammar workbooks
- Role-plays, describing photo-cards, speaking presentations (one to one with teacher for assessment)
- PowerPoint presentations
- Translations in both languages
- Weekly vocabulary / grammar tests
- Pen-friend letters

Apart from the weekly tests, mini-tests and end of term / end of year assessments are planned to assess and review progress.

When pupils are required to write pen-friend letters or short/long essays, different topics are requested to give them an opportunity to apply their broader knowledge.

ICT skills are used by pupils as a tool for research, projects or specific homework. In addition, pupils learn vocabulary and verbs, using interactive language websites, such as 'Quizlet', 'Memrise' but also they can practise their German listening skills, using the digital learning service 'Kerboodle'.

Impact

All pupils build their confidence and improve their pronunciation through active participation in class and consistent praise and constructive verbal and written feedback provided by teachers.

Pupils' learning is increased in lessons, they learn well and are enthusiastic. Weekly vocabulary or verb tests demonstrate pupils' learning. Class work and whole class discussions, homework and assessments allow the teachers to review pupils' progress and identify possible gaps of knowledge. The strong emphasis on grammar understanding help pupils to master grammatical rules and they are able to explain them in class.

Learning leads pupils to progress within the topics and to develop each language skill at a higher level, using more complex structures, vocabulary and tenses, following the requirements at KS2, KS3, KS4 and KS5. Lesson planning and schemes of work contribute effectively to the delivery of the curriculum.

Data gathered through assessments is recorded with the help of tracking documentation (Teacher's mark book and Behaviour Watch Mark Book for formal tests and exams) to demonstrate both attainment and progress over time. This contributes to identify gaps in knowledge in order to inform the planning of future lessons and units. Outstanding exam results show evidence of pupils' very high achievements.

Pen-friend letters and the French school exchange strengthened friendships and language communication and confidence, outside the school environment. Cultural trips allow pupils to practise and consolidate their language skills. The annual French and German poetry competition encourages creativity, originality and transfer pupils' knowledge in a different context, while writing poems.

Reading, translating and listening to authentic materials help pupils to develop their strategy skills to cope with unfamiliar vocabulary and deduce meaning. Pupils become more confident with the language skills and consolidate their previous learning.

The Language Department has consistently demonstrated outstanding records of achievement in French and German at GCSE and A Level (Alps grade 1 or 2, outstanding, since 2017/2018 Alps' analysis started), outstanding results in Latin GCSE and in Mandarin since 2019. As a result, more pupils have been studying French and German in GCSE, the Sixth Form in French and German has been made available for students since 2003. Since 2003, a number of GCSE French students continue at A level. Previous French Sixth Formers went to study French

Literature in Oxford University and French Language, combined with law / politics or art in prestigious London and Parisian universities.

Latin pupils' intake at GCSE has remained popular since its addition to the school timetable.

Cultural capital

St. John's Preparatory School provides its pupils with international experiences, such as pen-friend letters and presentation exchanges with partner schools to develop a strong awareness of similarities and differences in lifestyles and culture in France and Spain. A variety of workshops, such as dance and theatre, are carefully planned to allow pupils to enhance the knowledge acquired in pupils' language lessons by making real connections to learn and practice languages. An international day is also organised, where pupils dress up in their traditional outfits, taste different food and present cultural facts about their country.

St. John's Prep school has two recently established pen-friend letters exchanges with both our French and Spanish partner schools. The Prep school French partner is École Saint Jean Baptiste de la Salle in Vitry-le-François and the Spanish partner is C.E.I.P. Ciudad de Nara in Toledo.

At St. John's Senior School, our pupils have an opportunity to learn about religious traditions at Christmas, New Year and Easter time in France and Germany. Lower School pupils and Fourth Formers sing German Christmas carols with traditional music in class. Lower School pupils also sing 'silent night' in French in December. Pupils in French and German learn about music and cinema festivals in the countries studied.

In the summer term, French pupils research famous painters, musicians, scientists, sport and political people, historical facts, regional gastronomy in France and French-speaking countries around the world. Then, they prepare presentations in the target language, answer cultural quizzes and complete the French language challenges from the British Council to demonstrate their general knowledge of the country and language abilities. They listen to famous French singers and study the meaning of lyrics and sing as a whole class. They are rewarded by French biscuits and sweets.

German pupils research online products made in Germany and find out what HARIBO stands for. They discover the relationship between Adi Dassler (ADIDAS) and PUMA, the Albrecht brothers and ALDI etc. Secondly, pupils are introduced to some significant pieces of music, spanning from classical music to pop music. The aim is to understand that music can be universal and the pieces that have been chosen are well liked by people around the world.

In addition, renowned films made by German directors and film music composed by Hans Zimmer are researched. Again, usually pupils would not anticipate that these pieces of creative art are linked to Germany. They learn more about how the British Royalty is related to the German aristocracy and why we have a House of Windsor today. Once these studies have been completed, the newly gained knowledge will be practised through PowerPoint presentations, tested via quizzes and rewarded with a small amount of sweets made in Germany.

In KS4, we prepare for our residential visit to Berlin around Christmas time in 5th Form. This trip aims to give the students an opportunity to communicate in German in an authentic environment and have the best possible practice for their upcoming GCSE speaking examinations. In addition, they will learn more about German people and clichés, and to see first-hand what they have studied about German history.

Through the medium of films, DIE WELLE, ER IST WIEDER DA and GOODBYE LENIN, pupils discuss historical aspects of Germany, which tie in with the sites we will visit in Berlin, which are the Brandenburg Gate, the Holocaust Memorial, Reichstag, Memorial Sachsenhausen, Checkpoint Charlie and the Berlin Wall. As we go to Berlin during the season of Christmas markets, pupils also have a chance to try and taste a variety of specific German culinary specialities.

Since 2015, the Head of department has established and strengthened a partnership with Collège Jean-Baptiste de la Quintinye. All French language pupils have their own pen-friend with our partner school, they write to each other during the year. They can acquire a different insight of the respective culture, exchange musical tastes, personal information, compare their ways of life in school and out of school, give opinions and ask questions. Fourth Formers even discuss their experiences on regional festivals, environmental and social issues.

In Latin, 3rd Formers go on a Visit day to the British museum. 3rd and 4th Formers also carry out projects on different areas influenced by Classics, such as architecture and religion. 4th and 5th Formers establish links between Roman politics and modern history and politics.

In French and Mandarin 6th Formers study different aspects of the culture, such as music, cinema, and festivals, current affairs such as immigration and political reforms and social issues.

Their speaking research project enables pupils to develop not only their independent research skills but especially their critical and analytical thinking, which will equip for their future studies at university or the world of work.