



Rettendon Primary School

Policy on Modern Foreign Languages (MFL)

1 Aims and objectives

- 1.1 In our school, we support the view that learning a modern foreign language is an entitlement for all pupils. We are therefore committed to the principle that learning another language is appropriate for all children, whatever their ability or special needs. We will also seek to develop our curriculum so that teaching a foreign language is a normal part of it. We will do this for several reasons. Firstly, we believe that many children really enjoy learning to speak another language. Secondly, we also believe that the earlier a child is exposed to a foreign language, the faster the language in question is acquired, and an advantage of introducing a new language at primary school is that children tend to be less self-conscious about speaking aloud at this stage of their development. Also, it is widely accepted that the early acquisition of a foreign language facilitates the learning of other foreign languages later in life.
- 1.2 Our main objective in the teaching of a modern foreign language at primary school is to promote the early development of linguistic competence. We believe that to accomplish this, we should help the children 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, and work with materials from different countries and communities, 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 of the above, a sound basis for further study at Key Stage 3 and beyond.

2 Teaching and learning style

- 2.1 We recognise that language learning in its broadest sense has three core strands: learning to communicate (with the emphasis on oracy, i.e. listening, speaking and interacting); learning ABOUT language (using literacy, i.e. reading and writing in the foreign language, to learn about the writing system, spelling and structure of the language); learning about and comparing different cultures (inter-cultural understanding). We also recognise that children should be encouraged to apply knowledge already learnt about their own language to their learning of the new language. We aim to equip pupils with strategies for language learning that they can use in the future when studying another foreign language.

- 2.3 We use a variety of techniques to encourage the children to engage actively in the modern foreign language: these include games, role-play and songs (particularly action songs). We often use puppets and soft toys to demonstrate the foreign language, and we also invite native speakers into the classroom and listen to recordings, in order to expose the children to more than one voice in the foreign language. We frequently use mime to accompany new vocabulary in the foreign language, as this teaches the language without the need for translation.
- 2.4 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.
- 2.5 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.
- 2.6 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.

3 Organisation

- 3.1 We teach a foreign language to children throughout Key Stage 2. The way in which this is organised varies, depending on our staffing situation each year. We introduce the subject in Year 3 with taster classes, which are normally taught by a specialist language teacher. In Years 4, 5 and 6, we try to build some specialist language teaching into the normal school curriculum. This is sometimes done by timetabling language lessons each week, or it may be done by planning for 'block' weeks of intensive instruction. We also plan opportunities for language learning in the teaching of other subjects (see Section 5 below). The foreign language is normally taught by a specialist, unless, of course, the class teacher happens to be a language specialist too. We also involve a native speaker of the foreign language, as we believe that this provides an excellent model of the spoken language.
- 3.2 We also strive to ensure that our children's transition to secondary school is as smooth as possible. We use the QCA Bridging Topic in Year 6, and we pass on clear and accurate records to the secondary school about each child's achievements in language learning.

4 The curriculum

- 4.1 French is the modern foreign language that we teach in our school.

The curriculum that we follow is based on the guidance given in the Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages, the National Curriculum Non-Statutory Guidelines for MFL and the QCA Schemes of Work for MFL at Key Stage 2.

- 4.2 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.

5 The contribution of MFL to teaching in other curriculum areas

5.1 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.

5.2 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.

5.3 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.

5.4 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.

5.5 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.

5.6 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).

5.7 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).

5.8 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'.

5.9 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'.

Foundation Stage

The youngest children also have a regular French lesson which is fun and interactive.

6 Modern foreign languages and ICT

- 6.1 Our school has established a partnership with a school in France. Each child has been ascribed an e-pen-pal, with whom he or she has the opportunity to correspond on a half-termly basis at school, and on a regular basis at home. We therefore teach the children which key combinations they need to produce accents and other diacritical marks in the foreign language. We also enable the children to use digital and video cameras, in order to record performances of songs, role-plays or mini-dramas.

7 Modern foreign languages and inclusion

- 7.1 At our school, we teach a modern foreign language to all children, whatever their ability. 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.
- 7.2 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.
- 7.3 Intervention through School Action and School Action Plus will lead to the creation of an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for children with special educational needs. The IEP may include, as appropriate, specific targets relating to the modern foreign language.
- 7.4 We enable pupils to have access to the full range of activities involved in learning a modern foreign language. Where children are to participate in activities outside the classroom (e.g. playing a playground game in a modern foreign language), we carry out a risk assessment prior to the activity, to ensure that the activity is safe and appropriate for all pupils.

8 Assessment for learning

- 8.1 We assess the children in order to ensure that they make good progress in this subject. We do this informally during the lessons.

9 Resources

- 9.1 We have built up strong links with the local specialist language college. This enables us to access specialist language teaching and additional resources (e.g. audio and interactive CDs; videos and DVDs; books, games and artefacts) which supplement our own more modest collection of resources. Interactive CD-ROMS are kept in the computer suite; other modern foreign language resources are kept in the resources room.

10 Monitoring and review

- 10.1 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, who also:

- supports colleagues in their teaching, by keeping informed about current developments in MFL, and providing a strategic lead and direction for this subject;
- gives the headteacher an annual summary report in which s/he evaluates the strengths and weaknesses in MFL, and indicates areas for further improvement;

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- uses specially allocated regular management time to review evidence of the children's work, and to observe MFL lessons across the school.

10.4 This policy will be reviewed at least every three years.

Signed: J Barber

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