

Modern Foreign Languages Policy

St Thomas of Canterbury Primary School

2021-2022

At St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School we believe that the learning of a foreign language provides a valuable educational, social and cultural experience for our pupils. It helps them to develop their ability to communicate, including key skills of speaking and listening and extends their knowledge of how language works. It provides excitement, enjoyment and challenge for children and teachers, helping to create enthusiastic learners and to develop positive attitudes to language learning throughout life. Learning another language gives children a new perspective on the world, encouraging them to understand their own cultures and those of others. The natural links between languages and other areas of the curriculum can enrich the overall teaching and learning experience.

All Key Stage 2 pupils are entitled to weekly foreign language learning in school time. St Thomas of Canterbury recognises the value of this initiative and will provide age-appropriate MFL learning opportunities children in Years 3 - 6. The focus language taught in our school is French.

Aims and objectives of MFL education at St Thomas of Canterbury

The aims of Primary Languages teaching at St Thomas of Canterbury are to

- foster an interest in language learning by introducing children to other languages in a way that is enjoyable and accessible to all pupils;
- stimulate and encourage children's curiosity about language and creativity in experimenting with it;
- support oracy and literacy, and in particular develop speaking and listening skills;
- help children develop their awareness of cultural similarities and differences;
- lay the foundations for future language study by pupils;
- provide an added perspective on first language teaching and learning;
- give an extra dimension to teaching and learning across the curriculum.

Speaking and listening

The children will learn to

- listen carefully and recognise sounds and combinations of sounds which are similar to, or different from, those of English;
- understand and respond with increasing competence, accuracy and confidence in a range of situations;
- join in songs, rhymes, raps and stories which enable them to practise the sounds of the language in an enjoyable way
- take part in conversations at an appropriate level, reacting to instructions and questions and expressing opinions and feelings;
- memorise and recite short texts, and prepare and give a talk on a familiar subject confidently and with regard to the audience

Reading and writing

The children will learn to

- remember grapheme-phoneme correspondences and vocabulary directly taught and reinforced through word games and similar activities;
- read stories and rhymes for enjoyment and to gain awareness of the structure of the written language;
- read, copy and write independently familiar words and simple phrases in context
- e.g. classroom items, display labels, weather chart, date;
- write sentences and short texts independently and from memory.

Intercultural understanding

The children will learn to

- describe the life of children in the countries where the language is spoken;
- identify similarities and differences in everyday life, social conventions, traditional stories and celebrations;
- recognise how symbols, products and objects can represent the culture of a country, and how aspects of the culture of different countries become incorporated in the daily life of others;
- recognise and mistrust stereotypes, and understand and respect cultural diversity.

Teaching and learning Primary Languages at St Thomas of Canterbury

At St Thomas of Canterbury we endeavour to integrate language learning into everyday school life, with teachers, teaching assistants and children using and experimenting with their knowledge of different languages whenever the opportunity arises. We foster a problem-solving approach, giving children opportunities to work out language use for themselves in a supportive context where risk-taking and creativity are encouraged, and there is an emphasis on having fun with the new language. ICT is used regularly to enhance teaching and learning.

There are **three** main contexts in which language teaching and learning take place.

1. Languages lessons

Although MFL cuts across the curriculum, children are taught specific skills, concepts and vocabulary in a weekly dedicated lesson with the designated teacher (the content of these sessions is reinforced by the class teacher during the week).

2. Languages embedded into other lessons

Where appropriate, teachers give children opportunities to practise their foreign language in the context of lessons in other subject areas. For instance, some instructions may be given in another language; or children may count in another language while carrying out a numeracy activity. This acts to reinforce the vocabulary and structures they have learned.

3. Incidental language

Languages are part of the day to day life of the school. For example, teachers who feel confident can use the foreign language to give simple classroom instructions ('come in quietly'; 'listen'; 'look'), to ask questions ('who wants school dinner?', 'what's today's date?') and to take the register. Children are encouraged to respond using the language they have learned, and sometimes teachers and pupils

develop new language skills together, teachers acting as role models in the learning process. This integrated approach is a strong model for teaching and learning, giving children opportunities to use and develop their language for communicating in stress-free, real-life contexts.

Intercultural understanding

Modern Foreign Languages provide a basis for teaching and learning about other cultures, and this is incorporated into many areas of the curriculum including personal and social education, geography, religious education, design and technology, music, art and dance. Efforts are made to ensure that teaching material across the curriculum includes a basic awareness of the country where the focus language is spoken. There will be opportunities for celebrations of other cultures and heritages which is particularly apt in our school.

Inclusion

MFL teaching at St Thomas of Canterbury is fully inclusive. No child is excluded by reason of a learning difficulty, or because they have English as an additional language. Experience has indeed shown that such children can derive particular benefit from taking part in MFL learning activities in which they may be less disadvantaged than in other areas of the curriculum.

Language learning activities are planned in such a way as to encourage the full and active participation of all pupils. Work is differentiated as appropriate to the needs of individual children. Pairs and groups for collaborative work may be made up in different ways, depending on the task.

Staff development

Teachers and other staff are given opportunities and encouragement to develop their own language and language teaching skills, through in-school progression and local authority training. The subject leader for MFL identifies school needs and circulates professional development opportunities.

Monitoring progress and assessing attainment

Opportunities to monitor the children's progress in MFL are built into our programmes of study. Most assessment is formative and is used to support teaching and learning and inform future planning. Assessments are based on observation of children working on different oral activities and (where appropriate) written work.

Links outside school

The teaching of Modern Foreign Languages gives us an ideal opportunity for making links outside school. We encourage children to share their experiences of visiting or living in other countries, and we welcome visiting speakers who are able to talk about life in the countries where the focus language is spoken. We make full use of ICT links via e-mail, video-conferencing, Skype and approved sites on the Internet, to find out about life in other countries.