

Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) Policy

Reviewed September 2021

Introduction

'In the knowledge society of the 21st century, language and competence and intercultural understanding are not optional extras, they are an essential part of being a citizen. Language skills are also vital in improving understanding between people here and in the wider world, and in supporting global citizenship by breaking down barriers of ignorance and suspicion between nations. Learning other languages gives us insight into the people, culture and traditions of other countries, and helps us to understand our own language and culture.' (DFES)

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. (National Curriculum)

At Firs Primary School over 70% of the pupils are learning English as an additional language. Pupils are from a variety of minority ethnic groups and over 35 languages are spoken across the school. There is a high level of pupil transience across the school, with many pupils arriving within Key Stage 2 from other English primary schools or as direct entrants from abroad. Pupils at Firs Primary move on to a variety of different secondary schools, in which they may go on to study French, Spanish or German at Key Stage 3.

Intent

The 2013 National Curriculum for Modern Foreign Languages aims to ensure that all children:

- Understand and respond to spoken and written language from a variety of authentic sources.
- Are able to speak with increasing confidence, fluency and spontaneity, finding ways of communicating what they want to say, including through discussion and asking questions, and that they are 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.

A high quality languages education should foster children's curiosity and deepen their understanding of the world. At Firs Primary School, we are committed to ensuring that competence in another language enables children to interpret, create and exchange meaning within and across cultures. It also helps children develop skills that will open further opportunities later in life.

Learning a foreign language allows pupils to develop transferable skills and language learning skills whilst also increasing awareness of different countries and cultures. In our school, children have the opportunity to learn a range of modern foreign languages as part of the school's curriculum which is based on the 'Discovering Language' approach.

The Discovering Language Program is based upon the 'Language Awareness' vision of language learning set out by Professor Eric Hawkins in his 2005 paper in the 'The Language Learning Journal'. It was developed by the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) with support from the Esmee Fairburn Association.

Hawkins proposed that language learning should fall into two stages; stage 1 (5-14 years) should be 'educational foreign language learning', followed by 'instrumental' language learning in stage 2 (14-19).

Discovering Language aims to meet the requirements of Hawkins' stage 1, educational language learning which includes:

- 'Training of the ear'
- Grammar study and analysis of patterns
- Focus on meaning
- Intercultural encounters and immersion experiences
- An accessible 'apprenticeship' language e.g. Spanish instead of French!

It is an adaptable, multilingual model which can be delivered by non-specialists. In Discovering Language, pupils have the opportunity to study 4 or more languages from a variety of language families, as well as non-language specific modules (generic studies of language features), which enable children to become aware of similarities and differences between languages as well as developing their understanding of the origin and purpose of language.

What are the benefits of Discovering Language instead of the typical single language model studied at a primary level?

- The development of knowledge and understanding of how 'language' works, preparing pupils for learning different languages in Key Stage 3 (pupils from Firs Primary move to a range of different secondary schools which offer different languages at Key Stage 3 and 4. Several offer Spanish, which under the previous 'French only' model at Firs Primary School the children would have had no experience of).
- Each language introduced builds sequentially on pupils' knowledge of grammar, patterns and language learning strategies.
- The opportunity to be delivered flexibly in schools, integrated within a well-planned, ambitious primary curriculum – it is possible to link language learning to the topics being studied, providing more opportunities for meaningful cross-curricular link e.g. studying Latin in the year in which Romans and Greeks are studied in history.
- An adaptable, multilingual model which can be delivered by non-specialists. This is important because, unlike in secondary schools, primary teachers are rarely specialists in language teaching and so lack the subject knowledge to teach one modern foreign language in the depth required over four years. Teachers effectively learn alongside the children – encouraging children to view language learning as a desirable and lifelong skill.
- An opportunity to celebrate and admire the linguistic footprint of our school community and ensure the curriculum reflects the local context - we have been able to include two of our community languages into our bespoke model; Russian and Roma.
- Valuable experience of language learning whilst developing strategies to decode meanings of new languages.
- Multi-media and community resources can support the teaching of new languages.
- Mixed-age rolling programme planning will be facilitated by language change.
- All KS2 teachers are literacy trained and can utilise their grammatical knowledge to make links between languages and enhance vocabulary acquisition.
- A broad and rich curriculum experience given to pupils through learning several languages and cultures.
- Substantial progress in one language can still be reached in Year 6 using specialist input from a bilingual teaching assistant.
- Language changes, when pupils move between schools and teachers move between year groups, will be less of an issue. This is particularly important for our school which has significantly above average levels of pupil transience.

This means that many pupils arrive at different points within key stage 2, with varying levels of foreign language experience.

- Languages can be chosen according to staff expertise, community needs, curriculum links, available resources and KS3 transition.
- Research suggests that pupils with 'language awareness' backgrounds are more positive about learning languages and more likely to go on to study languages beyond Key Stage 4.

Implementation

Each of the languages chosen as part of our 'Discovering Languages' approach has been carefully selected for the benefits it offers our pupils. Children in Key Stage 2 have a weekly language lesson of 30-45 minutes. Key learning is repeated throughout the week to support children to embed the vocabulary learned.

Which languages are taught at Firs Primary School, and how are they chosen?

Latin

Latin is studied for 2.5 terms in lower key stage 2. As an ancient language the focus is to provide a "linguistic foundation for reading comprehension and an appreciation of classical civilisation" (National Curriculum).

The study of Latin provides many opportunities for the study of etymology (word origins) which supports spelling and vocabulary in the English language. It also enables teachers to build upon cross-curricular learning opportunities arising from historical study of the Greek and Roman civilisations.

German

German is studied for 2.5 terms in lower key stage 2. This language was chosen as it is from the Germanic language family and has close links with the English language, providing opportunities for further study of etymology. It is a frequently studied foreign language with a wide range of available teaching resources. The school has also made links with a partner school in Osnabruck – Derby's twin city, which means that the children will have meaningful opportunities to practice their written German when writing to German pupils.

Spanish

Spanish is studied for 2.5 terms in upper key stage 2. This ensures that pupils have a basic foundation in Spanish preparing them for further study of the language should they go on to study it at Key Stage 3. Spanish is taught in several of the local secondary schools. Spanish is also considered more accessible than French as it is phonically regular. There are a wide range of teaching resources available to support the teaching of Spanish.

Russian

Russian is taught for one year in upper key stage 2 in greater depth than the other languages studied. The school are lucky enough to employ a Russian speaking teaching assistant, with a 'Teaching Russian as a Foreign Language Qualification', who delivers Russian lessons with the support of qualified teachers. Russian has been chosen as it provides the children with the opportunity to study a language using a different alphabet, as well as being a local community language. This enables us to build on the knowledge that some of our pupils already have about Russian language, culture and traditions

Roma

This is our most widely spoken community language. Although there are currently no commercially available resources to support the teaching of Roma, the school is working in partnership with the local community and New Communities Achievement team to develop video-based resources to support pronunciation. The aim of teaching

Roma is to strengthen links and appreciation of cultural diversity between children from different cultural backgrounds at the school. Roma teaching also sits alongside our annual celebration of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month.

Year Group	Language	Scheme	Benefits
Lower Key Stage 2 Cycle A	Latin (including some Greek) Ancient Language	Maximus Classics	<p>Cross Curricular Links:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History (Romans and Greeks) • Maths (Roman numerals) • English (myths and legends, word origins and families, grammar) • Science (Linnaean Classification) • Art and Design (mosaics and pottery) • SMSC (Greek philosophers) <p>Training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding secured from the 'Classics for All' charity for training for all KS2 teachers in 2020.
Lower Key Stage 2 Cycle B	German Germanic Language	Early Start Languages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many pupils will have the opportunity to study German further at KS3, this ensures they will have a foundational knowledge of the language • Many pupils have arrived in England from Eastern European countries which border Germany including Poland; Slovakia, Czech Republic. This allows them to build on the commonalities between their home language and German • Links have been made with a school in Osnabruck, Germany (Derby's twin city) – pupils are able to exchange letters with children at this school • The Early Start German scheme provides pupils with the opportunity to learn about German culture as well as its language. The video resources ensure they have access to models of accurate pronunciation and ensure teachers are well supported to deliver the lessons regardless of their own German language experience.
Upper Key Stage 2 Cycle A	Spanish Romantic Language	Early Start Languages	<p>Cross Curricular Links:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Links to the 'Hola Mexico' topic; geography and history. • Many pupils will have the opportunity to study Spanish further at KS3, this ensures they will have a foundational knowledge of the language • Spanish is a more easily accessible beginner language than French as it is phonetically more regular. • The Early Start Spanish scheme provides pupils with the opportunity to learn about Spanish culture as well as its language. The video resources ensure they have access to models of accurate pronunciation and ensure teachers are well supported to deliver the lessons regardless of their own Spanish language experience
Upper Key Stage 2 Cycle B	Russian Language with a different alphabet	Soroka	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops children's earlier learning about the Greek alphabet

	and community language		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Russian is one of the school’s community languages, with many children’s parents having studied it themselves at school • The school has a specialist Russian teacher (native Russian speaker, with a Teaching Russian as a Foreign Language qualification).
KS2 (within Roma History Month)	Roma Community language	Developed by the school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides an annual opportunity to celebrate our most widely spoken community language and challenge negative stereotypes associated with Gypsy Roma Travellers

Children also develop their understanding and awareness of language learning through non-language specific modules. These are taught as follows:

Lower Key stage 2 Cycle A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discovering Language: Our First Words
Lower Key Stage 2 Cycle B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discovering Language: Sounds and Signs - Active introduction to language learning (and deaf signing).
Upper Key stage 2 Cycle A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discovering Language: Sounds and Signs – Words are Cool!
Upper Key stage 2 Cycle B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discovering Language: Sounds and Signs – The Story of Writing

Although formal foreign language teaching is not introduced until Key Stage 2, all children across the school take part in European Day of Languages which includes Young Interpreters Training for every class. This is an opportunity to celebrate the diversity of languages in the school and recognise the different ways in which children can communicate even if they don’t share a language.

Children of any age in Key Stage 2 can also attend a weekly lunchtime Russian club.

Impact

Our MFL curriculum ensures that children develop their knowledge of where different languages, including the range of home languages spoken by the families of the school and those languages taught formally, are spoken in the world. Varied learning experiences, including ‘European Day of Languages’ and Roma History Month also ensure that languages are celebrated throughout the school community whilst providing a context for language learning and develop the children’s understanding of different cultures.

Impact is monitored by the MFL Coordinator through pupil voice, lesson observations and scrutiny of individual and whole class topic books.

Teaching and Learning

We recognise that language learning in its broadest sense has three core strands - oracy, literacy and intercultural understanding. We also recognise that children should be encouraged to apply their knowledge and that we should equip them with strategies for language learning that they can use in the future, when studying another foreign language.

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. We have chosen schemes that provide video resources of native speakers so that children are exposed to accurate pronunciation of a language from a variety of speakers. If a child is fluent in

the language being taught (ie it is their home language) we use them as 'experts' to support other pupils. We frequently use mime and pictures to accompany new vocabulary in the foreign language, as this teaches the language without the need for translation.

We teach the four strands of speaking, listening, reading and writing and to understand basic grammar, including: feminine, masculine and the conjugation of high-frequency verbs; key features and patterns of the language; how to apply these to build sentences; and how these differ from or are similar to English.

We build children's confidence through praise for any contribution that they make in the foreign language, however tentative. We allow for differentiation, with a range of strategies, which include:

- Providing resources and setting tasks of different complexities, matched to the ability of the child.
- Setting common tasks which are open-ended and can have a variety of responses.
- Providing speaking and writing frames to scaffold responses.
- Using a range of questioning.

Cross- curricular Links

Learning another language presents opportunities for the reinforcement of knowledge, skills and understanding developed in other curriculum areas. These opportunities can be exploited through aspects of;

English: Development of speaking and listening skills, knowledge and understanding of grammar and sentence construction. Opportunities to compare the foreign language with English or another language can be exploited through use of the new alphabet, phonemes, rhyming patterns, sound/ spelling links, dictionary work, formation of structures (e.g. singular/ plural, gender, negatives, question forms, position of adjectives, imperatives), intonation, dialogues, poetry, different text types and formation of complex sentences.

ICT: Use of email with schools abroad, materials from the internet and satellite television, video and audio, presentation of data, word processing, easy speak microphones.

Citizenship: The multilingual society, knowledge of other countries and cultures.

Numeracy: Counting, calculations, money, time and date etc.

Geography: Work related to studying other countries, weather.

Science: Parts of the body, animals.

Music: Rhyming, rhythm, singing, composition and world music.

RE: Celebration of festivals, storytelling, calendars, customs, international and multicultural work

History: Study of the history of other countries.

Art: Colours, artists from around the world, descriptions of paintings.

PE: Physical responses to the teachers' instructions issued in the language being learnt.

Assessment

The children are assessed by the teacher and also carry out self-assessments to see and monitor the progress that they are making in the language. This is done informally during the lessons to inform future planning.

We assess:

- listening

- speaking
- talking to somebody
- reading
- writing
- intercultural understanding

Children are assessed on an ongoing basis by the class teacher. At the end of each term teachers will assess children against the POS in order to inform future planning. On an annual basis, we report progress to parents as part of our end of year report.

Monitoring and Review

A Modern foreign languages co-ordinator within the school monitors the learning of languages.

Equal Opportunities

At Firs Primary School we are committed to promoting equal opportunities irrespective of socio-economic background, gender, disability and ethnicity in all areas of the curriculum. We believe all children should have access to and participation in the learning of languages and to be supported in this process.

Inclusion At Firs Primary School

We teach a modern foreign language to all children, whatever their ability. A modern foreign language forms part of the school's commitment to providing a broad and balanced education to all children. Through our modern foreign language teaching, we provide learning opportunities that enable all children to make progress. We do this by setting suitable learning challenges and responding to each child's different needs.

Parents

Parents are encouraged to inform the school about the languages they speak and these can then be added to the list of the languages celebrated through our Language Celebration Days.