



MARSHBROOK FIRST SCHOOL

Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) Policy

February 2015

1 Aims and objectives

- 1.1** In our school we teach a foreign language to all Key Stage Two children as part of the normal school curriculum. We 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. We also believe that it is a good idea to introduce a new language to children when they are at primary school, as they tend to be less self-conscious about speaking aloud at this stage of their development. It is widely believed that the early acquisition of a foreign language facilitates the learning of other foreign languages later in life.
- 1.2** The learning of a foreign language provides a valuable educational, social and cultural experience for the pupils. We believe that providing children with the chance to learn a modern foreign language develops communication and literacy skills that not only help lay the foundation for future language learning but also future literacy learning, particularly speaking and listening. They develop linguistic competence, extend their knowledge of how language works and explore differences and similarities between the foreign language and their own. Learning another language raises awareness of the multilingual and multicultural world and introduces an international dimension to pupils' learning, giving them an insight into their own culture and those of others. The learning of a foreign language provides a medium for cross-curricular links and for reinforcement of knowledge, skills and understanding developed in other subjects. Language learning can build self-confidence and self-esteem through achievement and promotes global citizenship.
- 1.3** The main objective of teaching a modern foreign language in primary school is to promote the early development of a child's linguistic competence. We also want to:
- foster an interest in learning about other languages, lives and cultures;
 - introduce young children to another language in a way that is enjoyable and fun;
 - stimulate and encourage children's curiosity about language;
 - make young children aware that language has structure, and that the structure differs from one language to another;
 - help children develop their awareness of cultural differences in other countries;
 - develop their speaking and listening skills;
 - lay the foundations for future study;
 - raise awareness of the need for languages as a skill for life;
 - Extend language teaching beyond their mother tongue.

2 Teaching and learning style

- 2.1** We base the teaching on the guidance material in the QCA scheme of work for modern foreign languages. We have adapted this to the context of our school and the abilities of our children.
- 2.2** 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 sometimes invite native speakers or specialist language teachers into the classroom, 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.
- 2.3** 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.
- 2.4** 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 they make in the foreign language, however tentative.

3 Organisation

- 3.1** We teach a foreign language to children in Key Stage Two both discretely and as part of other subjects eg: following instructions in PE. The Class teacher supplements language learning by using classroom management vocabulary throughout the day and takes the register in a foreign language.
- 3.2** Key Stage One and Foundation Stage children do not receive a foreign language lesson each week but the class teacher may introduce incidental classroom management vocabulary and take the register in a foreign language when appropriate.

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 revised National Curriculum and the supplementary guidance published by QCA. We apply the four attainment targets for MFL to Key Stage 2. These are:

- AT1: Listening and responding
- AT2: Speaking
- AT3: Reading and responding
- AT4: Writing

However, we do not give equal weighting to each of these skills in each unit taught. For example, in the initial stages of our teaching we place particular emphasis on speaking.

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 modern foreign languages 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 play number games that reinforce their counting and calculation skills, expand their understanding of date, and increase their knowledge about money. Children reinforce their time-telling skills too by playing time-related games in the foreign language.

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 multilingual. 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).

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. the relationship between England and France when studying the Tudors, the events of WW2).

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, for example 'Sur le Pont d'Avignon' in the case of France. We also teach children a variety of pair and team warm-up games using instructional vocabulary in the modern foreign language to explain how the game is to be played. Many of the classroom based games we use to teach children modern foreign languages are very active games that require fast reactions, for example French versions of 'Simon Says' and 'Grandmother's Footsteps'.

6 Modern foreign languages and computing

- 6.1** Our pupils use the internet to research information about the countries in which the foreign language is spoken. We also enable the children to use digital and video cameras, in order to record performances of songs, role-plays or mini-dramas. The interactive whiteboard is used to play games and deliver the curriculum.

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 special needs support 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 (for example, 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, and at the end of a unit to assess what the children have learned. There are no national key stage tests, but we do award the children through house points, star status certificates in the weekly celebration assembly or wow certificates in the termly awards assemblies.

9 Resources

- 9.1** Our school has links with the middle school where there are teachers who specialise in teaching foreign languages. Through these teachers we have access to additional banks of resources (e.g. audio and interactive CDs; videos and DVDs; books, games and artefacts), which supplement our own more modest collection of resources.

10 Involvement in the wider community

- 10.1** We are members of the CELL (Cluster for Early Language Learning). The CELL meets regularly to discuss good teaching practice, to research all available resources and to organise CPD.

11 Monitoring and review

- 11.1** We monitor teaching and learning in the same way as we do all the other subjects that we teach in the school. The governors' curriculum committee has the responsibility of monitoring the success of our teaching of French.
- 11.2** The MFL coordinator also liaises with the local middle and secondary school, so that they are aware of the modern foreign language experience of our children when they move to the next phase of their education.
- 10.3** This policy will be reviewed at least every three years.