



Modern Foreign Languages

Introduction

The study of French offers pupils an important opportunity to become aware of a language different from their own, to be introduced to France and the French way of life and to develop general language skills through a new learning experience.

It has been suggested that pupils experiencing a modern foreign language show development in areas such as listening, reading, writing and pronunciation in addition to improved social skills through a new context for communication and interaction. Students at Beacon Hill really enjoy learning and using new languages and gain a great deal of confidence in speaking and listening.

The content of a modern foreign language brings pupils into contact with aspects of the culture of other countries which could promote greater awareness of themselves and their own culture and environment.

Aims

The aims of the French curriculum can be identified within the aims of Beacon Hill in the following ways:

- **To work in a creative and enterprising way to fulfil the School Aims**
To provide differentiation which will enable all pupils to progress.
To provide a wide variety of appropriate experiences
To provide a variety of platforms for showing and celebrating success.

- **High expectations for continuous improvement in order to raise standards for students.**
To encourage and develop an understanding of France and the French way of life.
To give pupils the opportunity to experience a language other than their own.
To recognise, value and celebrate achievement throughout Beacon Hill School.
To encourage success by producing opportunities for accreditation.

- **In which partners include, involve and inform each other.**
To encourage a sympathetic approach to the understanding of other people, places and cultures through parental involvement.

- **That positively promotes and encourages independence, confidence and self-advocacy.**

To enhance pupils' self esteem by enabling and encouraging success.

- **That values communication and provides the time and opportunity to make it effective.**

To offer opportunities for pupils to experience the target language with speakers of French and to provide, when possible, the facility for visits to France to further this aim.

To encourage communication with pupils from schools in France.

- **That extends inclusion within and beyond the school.**

To link with other schools and projects.

To provide positive experiences for all.

- **That gives students the skills and opportunity to make informed choices.**

To enhance pupils' self esteem by enabling and encouraging success.

To provide insight into other cultures and lifestyles.

- **Establish an atmosphere of security, trust and respect for all.**

To provide a safe, happy learning environment.

Objectives

Each pupil will have an individual teaching programme which will address the recommendations of the National Curriculum while at the same time providing for differentiation according to his/her needs.

Schemes of Work

Primary

There is an implicit aim within the Primary Department of offer a variety of opportunities which will enhance each pupil's experience. It, therefore, seems appropriate to provide situations which will enable pupils to gain knowledge and understanding of other people, countries and cultures. This experience will be accessed through topic work covering cross-curricular considerations, for example, tasting and/or cooking food, festivals of the world, music and theatre.

Secondary

Pupils have the opportunity to study French as an integral part of their curriculum over five years. Each pupil is offered this subject for approximately one hour per week. The curriculum is delivered by one teacher, supported by at least one teaching assistant.

All pupils, including those pupils with the most profound disabilities, should have opportunities to experience the language, sounds, smells, tastes, images and artefacts from countries where the target language is spoken. Pupils who are

working at pre-level 1 should be able to access National Curriculum through a differentiated, age appropriate Scheme of Work alongside those pupils who are functioning within the range of National Curriculum levels.

Within each Scheme of Work there will be units of work offering pupils the opportunity to:

- **Acquire Knowledge and Understanding of the Target Language**

Pupils should be taught:

- The principles and inter-relationships of sounds and writing in the target language.
- Basic grammar of the target language and how to apply it.
- How to express themselves using a range of vocabulary and structure.

- **Developing Language Skills**

Pupils should be taught to:

- Listen attentively, and listen for gist and detail;
- Follow instructions and directions;
- Ask about meaning, seek clarification or repetition;
- Ask and answer questions, and give instructions;
- Ask and give information and explanations;
- Imitate pronunciation and intonation patterns;
- Initiate and develop conversations;
- Express agreement, disagreement, personal feeling and opinions;
- Describe and discuss present, past and future events.

Pupils who are unable to communicate by speech will be encouraged to use technology, signing and symbols as alternatives to speaking and listening. Pupils with vision impairment will have the opportunity to use appropriate alternatives which do not demand a visual approach.

- **Developing Language Learning Skills and Awareness of Language**

Pupils should be taught to:

- Listen to songs and rhythms;
- Learn by heart phrases and short extracts eg. rhymes, poems, songs, jokes, tongue twisters;
- Acquire strategies for committing familiar language to memory;
- Develop their independence in language learning and use;
- Use dictionaries and reference materials;
- Use context and other clues to interpret meaning;
- Understand and apply patterns, rules and exceptions in language forms and structures;
- Use their knowledge to experiment with language;

- Understand and use formal and informal language;
- Develop strategies for dealing with the unpredictable.

- **Developing Cultural Awareness**

Pupils should be given opportunities to:

- Experience the sensory element of music, smell, sounds and taste associated with the target country;
- Work with authentic materials, including newspapers, magazines, books, films, radio and television and internet from countries or communities of the target language;
- Come into contact with native speakers in this country and, where possible, abroad;
- Consider their own culture and compare it with the cultures of the countries and communities where the target language is spoken;
- Identify with the experiences and perspectives of people in these countries and communities;
- Recognise cultural attitudes as expressed in language and learn the use of social conventions, eg. forms of address.

- **Breadth of Study - Knowledge and Understanding of the Target Language**

Pupils should be given opportunities to:

- Communicate with each other in pairs and groups and with their teacher;
- Use language for real purposes, as well as to practise skills, (eg. by sending and receiving messages by telephone, letter, fax and email);
- Develop their understanding and skills through a range of language activities, eg. games, role play, surveys and other investigations.
- Take part in imaginative and creative activities, eg. improvised drama;
- Use everyday classroom events as a context for spontaneous speech;
- Discuss their own ideas, interests and experiences and compare them with those of others;
- Listen and respond to different types of spoken and written language, including texts produced using ICT;
- Read hand written and printed texts of different types and of varying lengths and, where appropriate, read aloud;
- Produce a variety of types of writing, including the use of ICT;
- Use a range of resources for communicating, eg. phone, fax, letters, email and accessing information.

Teaching and Learning Processes

There are principles underlying good educational practice which are common to all pupils regardless of their particular educational needs. However, there are

strategies which could help pupils with learning difficulties to achieve success and enhance self-esteem;

- a) Materials should be varied and clear.
- b) Tasks should have short-term goals with smaller, clearly identified steps.
- c) Tasks should be clear, practical and designed to build confidence.
- d) Activities should be challenging and of immediate interest.
- e) Pupils should be actively involved and experience regular success.
- f) Repetitions (whole class/group/pair) should be encouraged.
- g) There should be scope for immediate feedback.
- h) The importance of illustrative materials should be recognised, where appropriate, to support language learning.
- i) Learning experiences should be fun.
- j) Work should be differentiated within all groups to involve, include and motivate all pupils.

To expand upon the above, the following general points will be acknowledged when planning lessons:

- a) To cater for pupils who have a short concentration span activities should be short and varied, carefully mixed to ensure a balance of listening/responding, moving/sitting, watching/doing.
- b) Allow for lots of pupil participation.
- c) Use as wide a range of resources as possible for example, real objects, good quality audio cassettes, videos etc.
- d) Make French the language of the classroom by performing routine tasks in French, eg. classroom commands, calling the register.
- e) Develop routines so that pupils do not have to cope with too much that is new each lesson, eg. changing the date or weather chart.
- f) As already stated each step should be small and have an achievable goal so that pupils understand the reason they are learning and get a sense of satisfaction from being successful.
- g) Before starting work on a new unit, make clear to pupils what the aims and outcomes of their work will be.
- h) Make sure that instructions are always clear and have been understood.
- i) Building regular revision into the lessons.
- j) Cultural information should be practical and simple.
- k) Remind pupils throughout the lesson that they are using French.
- l) If pupils are willing, encourage them to 'perform to their peers from time to time, recording their performance on audio/or video tape as much as possible.
- m) At the end of each lesson, stress their achievements.
- n) Ask pupils to review their own achievements and involve them in planning whenever possible.

Cross Curricular Links

Through the areas of experience, pupils should have opportunities to:

- a) Explore links with other subjects.
- b) Develop knowledge, understanding and skills related to cross-curricular dimensions and themes.
- c) Extend their knowledge and understanding of the language, linguistic conventions and culture of the country or communities where the target language is spoken.

Links with other subjects

Working with other departments might entail:

- a) Help with the planning of a single modern language lesson.
- b) Joint planning and teaching of a single lesson.
- c) Joint planning and teaching of a series of lessons.

On a larger scale, there could be joint work between departments such as:

- a) Project work, planned and carried out over a period of time with other departments, eg. a dual-language news sheet.
- b) A short course combining two subjects which would be planned and taught jointly, eg. French and Geography, French and History, French and Music. A possible link with English could be the writing and performing of 'anti-stereotype sketches'.
- c) Assemblies, performances or theme weeks.

The profile of a MFL can be raised in a variety of ways throughout the school, eg. dual-language notices, signs and menus, target language with makaton signs or PECS symbols, assemblies and multi-cultural awareness days.

The use of Information Technology

It is a general requirement for the modern foreign language programme of study that all pupils should have opportunities in all key stages to develop information technology capability.

ICT offers all pupils learning opportunities which contribute both to MFL development and to pupils' personal and social development. ICT provides a natural medium for creating, storing, retrieving and communicating information and is an ideal resource in language learning.

Equal Opportunities

It is the aim of the equal opportunities policy to ensure that all pupils of similar abilities are able to achieve comparable outcomes in all areas of the curriculum regardless of race, gender or disability.

In order to achieve this aim the following good classroom practices are recommended:

- a) Asking direct questions of individuals to ensure equal participation.
- b) Ensuring that classroom arrangements allow teachers to move freely among pupils/students to offer equal access to their time and attention
- c) Monitoring the use of equipment and learning resources to ensure it is appropriate to individual needs.
- d) Declaring equal expectations of males and females and setting similar learning outcomes for pupils/students of similar abilities.
- e) Using a range of teaching learning styles to suit the different needs of pupils/students.
- f) Taking account of different paces, styles of learning, capabilities, interests and experiences of pupils/students.
- g) Raising the self-esteem of pupils/students of whom too little may have been expected in the past.
- h) Establishing recording procedures which monitor the learning and progress of individual pupils/students.
- i) Establishing a range of different groupings, sometimes mixed, sometimes single-sex, for practical, oral and problem solving activities.
- j) Monitoring the respective roles of males and females in different groupings (ie. Passive or active?).
- k) Creating a learning environment which is friendly to all pupils/students.
- l) Ensuring that visual displays and teaching materials do not contain gender bias in the images portrayed.
- m) Avoiding stereotyping in 'task' distribution.
- n) Ensuring equality of praise.
- o) Raising awareness in pupils/students of equal opportunities issues.
- p) Dealing firmly with physical or verbal harassment and bullying.
- q) Dealing firmly with sexist language and attitudes.
- r) Encouraging caring and considerate behaviour in all young people.

Monitoring and Assessment

Pupil Progress

Beacon Hill School have an established approach to monitoring, assessment and the recording of pupil progress, details of which are set out in the school's relevant policies. A recording system is in place to monitor pupil achievement, regardless of age or ability.

In the areas of MFL pupils are assessed and their baseline areas of achievement are recorded on the Attainment Tracking Profile paying particular attention to whether the objective has been experienced and/or achieved and noting the date.

Staff have a responsibility to monitor progress and achievement in addition to the suitability of objectives and targets. Staff should use their professional insight and knowledge of individual pupils, coupled with the prescribed criteria to decide when a pupil is ready to move onto a new area.

Performance Descriptions

These performance descriptions outline early learning and attainment before level 1 in eight levels, from P1 to P8.

The performance descriptions can be used by teachers in the same way as the National Curriculum level descriptions to:

- a) Decide which description best fits a pupil's performance over a period of time and in different contexts.
- b) Develop or support more focused day-to-day approaches to ongoing teacher assessment by using the descriptions to refine and develop long, medium, and short term planning.
- c) Track linear progress towards attainment at National Curriculum Level 1.
- d) Identify lateral progress by looking for related skills at similar levels across their subjects.
- e) Record pupils' overall development and achievement, for example, at the end of a year or a Key Stage.

Performance Descriptions across Subjects

The performance descriptions for P1 to P3 are common across all subjects. They outline the types and range of general performance that pupils with learning difficulties might characteristically demonstrate. Subject-focuses examples are included to illustrate some of the ways in which staff might identify attainment in different subject contexts.

P1(i) Pupils encounter activities and experiences. They may be passive or resistant. They may show simple reflex responses, for example, startling at sudden noises or movements. Any participation is fully prompted.

P1(ii) pupils show emerging awareness of activities and experiences. They have periods when they appear alert and ready to focus their attention on certain people, events, objects or parts of objects, for example, attending briefly to interactions with a familiar person. They may give intermittent reactions, for example, sometimes becoming excited in the midst of social activity.

P2(i) pupils begin to respond consistently to familiar people, events and objects. They react to new activities and experiences, for example, withholding their attention from unfamiliar forms of interaction. They begin to show interest in people, events and objects, for example, smiling at familiar people in familiar circumstances. They accept and engage in coactive exploration, for example, focusing their attention, when prompted, on sensory aspects of stories or rhymes in the target language.

P2(ii) pupils begin to be proactive in their interactions. They communicate consistent preferences and affective responses, for example, reaching out to a familiar person in a new setting. They recognise familiar people, events and objects, for example vocalising or gesturing in a particular way in response to a favourite visitor to their modern foreign languages sessions. They perform actions, often by trial and improvement, and they remember learned responses over short periods of time, for example, showing pleasure each time a particular character appears in a story dramatised in the target language. They cooperate with shared explanation and supported participation, for example, taking turn in interactions, imitating actions and facial expressions, with a familiar person using the target language.

P3(i) pupils begin to communicate intentionally. They seek attention through eye contact, gesture or action. They request events or activities, for example, pointing to key objects or people during modern foreign languages sessions. They participate in shared activities with less support. They sustain concentration for short periods. They explore materials in increasingly complex ways, for example, reaching out and feeling for objects as tactile cues to events in sessions simulating life in other cultural settings. They observe the results of their own actions with interest, for example, listening to their own vocalisations during sessions in which the target language is used. They remember learned responses over more extended periods, for example, following the sequence of a familiar routine in modern foreign language sessions and responding accordingly.

P3(ii) pupils use emerging conventional communication. They greet known people and may initiate interactions and activities, for example, prompting another person to join in with a familiar interactive sequence in the target language. They can remember learned responses over increasing periods of time and may anticipate known events, for example, pre-empting sounds or actions in familiar interactions in the target language. They actively explore objects and events for more extended periods, for example, scanning the pages of a magazine written in the target language. They apply potential solutions systematically to problems, for example, showing or giving an object in response to a request in the target language.

Performance Descriptions in MFL

From level P4 to P8, many believe it is possible to describe pupils' performance in a way that indicates the emergence of skills, knowledge and understanding in MFL. The descriptions provide an example of how this can be done.

P4 pupils attempt to repeat, copy or imitate some sounds heard in the target language. They may perform familiar or simple actions on request using repetition, sign or gesture as prompts. They listen and may respond to familiar rhymes and songs in a foreign language.

P5 pupils attempt one or two words in the target language in response to cues in a song or familiar phrase. They respond to simple questions, request or instructions about familiar events or experiences. Responses may be through vocalisation, sign or gesture and pupils' responses may depend upon repetition and support.

P6 pupils respond to others in a group. Their attempts to communicate in the target language may rely heavily upon repetition and gesture, and they may use facial expression and/or intonation to enhance meaning. They communicate positives and negatives in the target language in response to simple questions. They match and select symbols for familiar words, actions or objects presented in the target language.

P7 pupils introduce themselves by name in the response to a question in the target language. They contribute to using the target language for a purpose, for example, using ICT skills to access the internet and exchange information, with guidance from other pupils or adults. They listen, attend to and follow familiar interactions in the target language.

P8 pupils listen attentively and know that the target language conveys meaning. They understand one or two simple classroom commands in the target language. They respond briefly using single words, signs or symbols. They may need considerable support from a spoken model and from visual clues. They may read and understand a few words presented in a familiar context with visual clues. They can copy out a few words with support. They label one or two objects. With some support, they use the target language for a purpose, for example, requesting items in simulations of real life encounters in the target language.

Resources

Appropriate resources and materials are crucially important to the delivery of a successful MFL curriculum. This is especially important given the often insecure linguistic level of non-specialist teachers. These resources include the following:

- Le Club - BBC French Course
Le Francais, c'est Facile - Strategies and Resources for Special Needs
- Materials developed specifically for pupils of Beacon Hill School
- Audio, visual and Information Technology, including 'Le Francais, c'est Facile', 'Chante en Francis', 'Le Monde a Moi'.
- Human resources including French assistants, employed by North Tyneside, and visitors who speak French as their first language.
- BGFL: Games and resources online
- NGFL: Games and resources online
- Espresso: Online worksheets and games.

