

# Marton Manor Primary School

## Policy on Modern Foreign Languages (MFL)

- 1 Introduction: This policy was formulated in consultation with the staff at Marton Manor Primary School in Autumn 2006. It was approved by Governors in Autumn 2006. It was last reviewed in Spring 2022 . It will be reviewed in Spring 2024 or earlier if necessary.



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## 2 Aims and objectives

- 1.1 In our school, we support the view that learning a modern foreign language is an entitlement for all pupils during their time in Key Stage 2. 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 believe that many children really enjoy learning to speak another language. 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. In addition, it is widely accepted that the early acquisition of a foreign language facilitates the learning of our own grammar and other foreign languages later in life.
- 1.2 Our main objective is to promote the early development of linguistic competence. To accomplish this, we 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 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.
- 2.2 We base the teaching on the programme of study in the National Curriculum. We have adapted this to the context of our school and the abilities of our children.
- 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 props to demonstrate the foreign language, and we also use good models of native speakers in the classroom where appropriate and listen to recordings, in order to expose the children to more than one voice in the foreign language. We may use actions 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.

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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 increasing complexity matched to the ability of the child.

2.7 We assess the children's progress during the lessons, evaluating progress against the National Curriculum :

- Listening and responding;
- Speaking;
- Reading and responding;
- Writing.

### **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 a specialist language teacher. In Years 4, 5 and 6, we try to build on the initial learning by using cross-curricular themes. This is done by timetabling language lessons each week. The foreign language is normally taught by a specialist, unless, of course, the class teacher happens to be a language specialist too.

3.2 We also strive to ensure that our children's transition to secondary school is as smooth as possible.

### **4 The curriculum**

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

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,

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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 and grammar.

### **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 and help them to understand diversity and become more tolerant of other people's cultures and beliefs. 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 may 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 may 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.

### **5.8 Science**

Children learn about famous French scientists such as Louis Pasteur in this lesson.

## **6 Modern foreign languages and ICT**

6.1 The internet is used to research cultural aspects of French life, especially during French club. We also enable the children to use digital programmes and video to reinforce the concepts, vocabulary and ideas we are teaching. We have the potential to make links through email to French speakers and schools in France with appropriate supervision from staff.

## **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.

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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.

### **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 during the lessons using children’s own responses and their answers to short, low stakes tests. In this way we enable children to reinforce prior learning and we can see what they have retained. This helps us to inform our teaching and planning. We report to parents what the children have learned on an annual basis. There are no national key stage tests, but we do recognise achievement and effort with awards and certificates. The school uses the foundation subject milestones to evaluate the progress of each child.

8.2 Older children are encouraged to make judgements about how they can improve their own and each other’s work.

### **9 Resources**

9.1 We have specialist language teaching and additional resources (e.g. DVDs; books, games and artefacts) along with whiteboard resources.

### **10 Monitoring and review**

10.1 We monitor teaching and learning in the same way as we do all the other subjects that we teach in the school. The coordination and planning of the MFL curriculum are the responsibility of the subject leader, who liaises with a visiting specialist. The subject leader supports colleagues in their teaching, by keeping informed about current developments in MFL e.g. through attendance at courses, and providing a strategic lead and direction.

- There is an annual plan in which s/he evaluates the strengths and weaknesses in MFL, and indicates areas for further improvement;
- Some time is given to review evidence of the children’s work, and to observe MFL lessons across the school. Feedback is given to staff to support development in the subject.

10.2 The quality of teaching and learning in modern foreign languages is monitored and evaluated by the subject leader as part of the school’s agreed cycle of lesson observations.

Governors can see lessons taking place during learning walks and see displays around school. They can also see work in children’s books relating to modern foreign languages.