

Hinchliffe Mill Junior and Infant School

Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) Policy

(Reviewed February 2013)

Introduction

In our school we teach a foreign language to all children in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 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 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.

It has been a decision by all schools within the Holmfirth Pyramid that French is the language taught in primary schools, other European languages are offered in addition once at Holmfirth High, our local High School.

Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of learning a modern foreign language in primary school are:

- to foster an interest in learning other languages;
- to introduce young children to another language in a way that is enjoyable and fun;
- to make young children aware that language has structure, and that the structure differs from one language to another;
- to help children develop their awareness of cultural differences in other countries;
- to develop their speaking and listening skills;
- to lay the foundations for future study.

Organisation

In accordance with Pyramid policy, French is offered to all children for 45-60 minutes week. The classes are taught by visiting specialist teachers from Holmfirth High School in years 5 and 6, by the class teacher or skilled classroom support in years 3 and 4.

The Curriculum

French is the modern foreign language that we teach in our school. The curriculum that we follow is based on the Key Stage 2 Framework for MFL and the revised National Curriculum. 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, and communicate in the other language;
- examine aspects of life in another culture.

Teaching and learning style

We base the teaching on the guidance material in the Framework for MFL and using where appropriate, materials from the QCA scheme of work for modern foreign languages as well as a range of resources including Catherine Cheater, Early Start, A & C Blacks Developing French and French reading books. Whilst we follow the Scheme of Work developed within the Pyramid, it is adapted to the context of our school and the abilities of our children.

We use a variety of techniques to encourage the children to have an active engagement in the modern foreign language: these include games, role-play and songs (particularly action songs). We often use puppets and soft toys to demonstrate the foreign language, and when possible we use confident French speakers in the classroom, in order to expose the children to more than one voice in the foreign language as well as using DVD's, interactive resources and CD's. We frequently use mime to accompany new vocabulary in the foreign language, as this serves to demonstrate the foreign language without the need for translation. We emphasise Listening and Speaking skills over Reading and Writing skills in Year 3 but all four skills and especially independent Reading and Writing become increasingly important with progression year on year. After four years of language learning most children will be able to read and write short passages of familiar French, will have an understanding of some French culture, will have a basic understanding of some language structure, which they can apply to another language, will be able to hold a short, simple conversation and understand a range of familiar language.

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. 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.

Assessment

We assess children's progress formatively in order to ensure that they are moving forward in the learning process. This is done informally during the lessons in order to evaluate what the children are learning and to inform teaching. Assessment is in four key areas:

- listening and responding;
- speaking;
- reading and responding;
- writing in Years 5 and 6

Children fill in self-assessment sheets at times to monitor their own progress and feed back to teachers. In Years 5 and 6 the introduction of more formal levelling in line with National Curriculum levels is under development. It will not include any formal SAT's type assessment but will be done as part and parcel of the normal curriculum, formatively and summatively; raising the children's awareness of what they need to achieve to make further progress.

Monitoring and review

We monitor teaching and learning in the same way as we do all the other subjects that we teach in the school. The Primary Languages Coordinator from Holmfirth High School visits and monitors lessons annually. The Head Teacher also reports to the governing body on the progress of children in French in the same way as in any other subject. The governors' curriculum committee has the responsibility of monitoring the success of the teaching in French.

Transition: As the Language teaching is coordinated by the local secondary school, they are fully aware of the modern foreign language experience of our children when they move to the next phase of their education, thus transition in MFL is seamless. Children take through with them their books and work and a brief report of their progress is passed on. Schemes of Work for year 7 take into account prior knowledge and pupils' experience in French is valued and fostered.

Liaison

There is regular liaison with schools within the pyramid by the headteacher and year 6 teacher.

This Policy will be reviewed on a biennial basis.