

A Knowledge Based Curriculum- MFL department

Introduction

As a Modern Foreign Languages department, we wish to pass on our love for other countries and their language and culture. We wish to instil a sense of curiosity in the world through looking at French and Spanish speaking countries. In an ever changing world we also believe it's important for students to develop an outward looking attitude and think of the benefits of learning foreign languages.

We start developing key skills for GCSE from Year 7 onwards. We look at the differences and similarities between languages and cultures, we develop translation skills by looking at cognates and near-cognates, by looking at differences in word order and by realising the importance of committing to a regular programme of vocabulary learning. We use grammar terminology which will be familiar to students from Year 6 onwards and believe that by teaching a foreign language we are also helping to develop their English literacy skills too.

Knowledge in MFL

We have honed our five year curriculum plan to ensure that knowledge which is needed in many areas is given more teaching and learning time than other topics and is revisited frequently. Other topics, which while still being taught for their cultural value, are not as prevalent as core knowledge and therefore are not given as much time over the five years.

Our five year plan maps all the knowledge that students will need to be successful in their language learning. We don't just teach a topic or grammar point once. Our knowledge is also hierarchical as we know that we need to have taught numbers 1-60 for example, before we can begin to teach the 24hr clock.

There are sections of content that we feel every QEA child should 'know'. We expect our students to learn vocabulary, verb paradigms and tenses. This knowledge will be revisited and revised until it trips off the tongue because we feel that it is vital to enable students to form skills in all four skill areas, listening, speaking, reading and writing in foreign languages.

Key stage 4

Our curriculum strategy has been devised to maximise the potential of all pupils regardless of ability. Students are not set at all until they reach year 10. In fact, languages often aren't linear and fluency is only developed towards the end of their GCSE course and beyond.

Unlike some schools, languages are a core part of our curriculum and are studied by all students following both the purple and blue pathways. As an academic academy, we strongly believe that as well as ensuring students can access the English Baccalaureate EBACC, they also get to experience studying another culture as well as learning its language. This hinterland of cultural knowledge permeates all topics covered as we wish students to learn about life in other countries.

We know that universities are looking for students to have studied a foreign language as the skills required to do this show that the student will already be able to solve problems, to have well-developed communication skills and will have been able to work well with others; skills which employers are interested in also.