



St Herbert's RC Primary School

FOREIGN LANGUAGES POLICY

Approved by Governors on: 5th December 2022

Date to be reviewed: Autumn 2025

Signed on behalf of the Governing Body: *P Devine* (Chair)

St. Herbert's R.C. Primary School

This policy is set within the context of the School Mission Statement:

“Strong in Faith, Hope and Love, for the Common Good”

and the School Ethos:

“By loving one another as God loves us, we can achieve spiritually and academically”

1. Aims and Objectives

1.1 In our school we fully support our children learning a foreign language during their time in Key Stage 2. We are committed to the principle that learning another language is appropriate for all children, whatever their ability or special needs. 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. 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. Also, it is widely accepted that the early acquisition of a foreign language facilitates the learning of other foreign languages later in life.

1.2 Our main objective in the teaching of a foreign language at primary school is to promote the early development of linguistic competence. We believe that to accomplish this, we should help the children to do all of the following:

- Familiarise themselves with the sounds and written form of a 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

2.1 We recognise that language learning, in its broadest sense, 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 guidance material in the Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages and the National Curriculum Statutory Guidelines for Foreign Languages at Key Stage 2. 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 learning a 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 we also invite native speakers into the classroom and listen to recordings, 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.

2.4 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.

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 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 different complexities, matched to the ability of the child.

2.7 We assess the children's progress informally during the lessons, evaluating progress against the four National Curriculum Attainment Targets of:

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

3. Organisation

3.1 We teach a foreign language to children throughout Key Stage 2. We also plan opportunities to maximise language learning in the teaching of other subjects by coalescing, where possible, topic themes and bespoke language planning (see Section 5 below).

3.2 We also strive to ensure that our children's transition to secondary school is as smooth as possible. We have a close relationship with our feeder senior school and maintain an open discourse to keep up to date with their curriculum, language initiatives and forthcoming events.

4. The Curriculum

4.1 French is the foreign language that we teach at St. Herbert's. The curriculum that we follow is based on the guidance given in the Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages, the National Curriculum Statutory Guidelines for Foreign Languages.

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 FL to Teaching in Other Curriculum Areas

5.1 English: The learning of a 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 reinforce their time-telling skills by playing time-related games in the foreign language. We play number games 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 (PSHE) and citizenship: One of the main benefits to the children of learning a 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 (SMSC): By teaching a foreign language, we contribute to the children's cultural education. 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. In Foreign Language lessons children will learn about the climate of the countries in which the language is spoken.

5.6 Music: We teach children songs in the foreign language – both traditional and modern – which of course helps children to develop a sense of rhythm and an ear for melody. We also play them classical music by composers from the countries in question, for example, 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. For example, children learn about William the Conqueror in the case of France.

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. Many of the games we use to teach children foreign languages are very active games that require fast reactions, for example, French versions of "Simon Says" and "Grandmother's Footsteps".

7. Modern Foreign Languages and Inclusion

7.1 At our school, we teach a foreign language to all children, whatever their ability. A foreign language forms part of the school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Through our 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 We enable pupils to have access to the full range of activities involved in learning a foreign language. Where children are to participate in activities outside the classroom (e.g. playing a playground game in a 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

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 to evaluate what the children have learnt. There are no national key stage tests in this subject. The school uses the four national attainment targets to evaluate the progress of each child, and to provide information to the secondary school when the children transfer.

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 access to a wide bank of resources to enable the teaching of FL. The school has a range of resources that are used by the specialist language teacher to aid planning and delivery of sessions.

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 FL curriculum are the responsibility of the subject leader, who also:

- Supports colleagues in their teaching, by keeping informed about current developments in FL, and providing a strategic lead and direction for this subject;
- Gives the headteacher an annual summary report in which the strengths and weaknesses in FL are evaluated, and areas for further improvement are indicated.

10.2 The quality of teaching and learning in foreign languages is monitored and evaluated by the FL Leader as part of the school's agreed cycle of monitoring and evaluation.

10.3 The FL Leader reports to the governing body on the progress of children in French.

10.4 The FL Leader also liaises with the local secondary schools, so that they are aware of the foreign language experience of our children when they move to the next phase of their education.