

Alderwood Academy – KS2 Haven – French Subject Policy

Aims and purpose

This curriculum enables learners to manipulate language so that they can build their own meaning, sentences and structures independently. It develops pupils to be effective communicators who can confidently use their knowledge and skills to become global citizens and lifelong linguists, with a clear understanding of language and culture.

Knowledge and vocabulary

This principle recognises the important role that knowledge, and vocabulary as a particularly important type of knowledge, plays in learning. Our curriculum has a focus on the most important knowledge in languages: vocabulary, phonics and grammar. These are learned and applied through practice in listening, speaking, reading and writing. We identify and map the most frequently used vocabulary across the curriculum, both in terms of the introduction of new vocabulary and the necessary repetition of vocabulary that has gone before. Keywords are signalled in bold in our lesson materials to indicate their importance. They include three types:

- sound-symbol correspondences (the relationship between sounds and letters) which enable pupils to pronounce new vocabulary and recognise their written form, for example [ce]
- grammatical terms to unlock the understanding of grammar concepts, for example ‘grammatical gender’
- function words which unlock the ability to build phrases and sentences, for example the Spanish conjunction ‘y’ meaning ‘and’

Sequencing

A careful and purposeful sequencing of our curriculum content underpins the design of our curriculum, ensuring that pupils are able to build on and make links with existing knowledge. We introduce, for example, the essential verbs ‘to be’ and ‘to have’ early in the curriculum as pupils will use them frequently so that by the time they come to talk about the past, these verbs are firmly grasped and can be applied effectively as the auxiliary verbs that form the perfect tense. Attention is paid to vertical coherence via threads, which map the developments of concepts over time, for example in French, the thread ‘nouns and determiners’ begins with singular ‘avoir’ nouns in year 3, building to using the partitive article and the preposition ‘de’ at secondary.

Evidence-informed

Our evidence-informed approach enables the rigorous application of research outcomes, science of learning and impactful best practice both in education in general and at a subject specific level. For example, the design of our resources reflects findings from Sweller’s cognitive load theory and Mayer’s principles of multimedia learning whilst our lesson design draws on Rosenshine’s principles of instruction. We also draw on findings from research organisations such as the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF). At the subject level our vocabulary choices are informed by both frequency and rates of learning. Phonics sequencing follows an evidence-informed ‘bang for your buck’ principle of frequency and difficulty. Our approach to teaching grammar aligns with evidence that:

Alderwood Academy – KS2 Haven – French Subject Policy

- explicit teaching closes the gap for less naturally analytical learners;
- providing a succinct explanation before practising a grammar feature is more effective than asking pupils to spot patterns;
- bespoke listening and reading activities contrasting pairs of grammar features and making their processing essential to task completion lead to stronger learning than traditional comprehension tasks.

Diverse

Our commitment to breadth and diversity in content, language, texts and media can be seen throughout the curriculum, for example in the group of diverse school age characters that feature in our resources. To model the diverse populations that share a common language in Spanish lessons pupils meet characters from South America as well as Europe, and in French lessons they meet characters from North Africa, Europe and the Caribbean. Our German curriculum includes characters with Turkish and Polish heritage. We also teach the differences in how languages are spoken. For example, the pronunciation of [z] and [c] in different Spanish-speaking countries.

Accessible

Our curriculum is intentionally designed to facilitate high-quality teaching as a powerful lever to support pupils with SEND. Aligned with EEF guidance, our resources have a focus on clear explanations, modelling and frequent checks for understanding, with guided and independent practice. Lessons are chunked into learning cycles and redundant images and information are minimised to manage cognitive load. We have removed reference to year groups in our resources so that they can be used when pupils are ready, regardless of their age. Our resources are purposefully created to be accessible, for example by using accessible fonts and colours with good contrast. In our languages lessons we revisit vocabulary that has been previously taught and use it in different contexts to help embed it. Where appropriate, we use meaningful images to accompany vocabulary to support pupils' learning and recall.

National curriculum

There are four aims of the national curriculum. The first is that all pupils should 'understand and respond to spoken and written language from a variety of authentic sources'. Our curriculum focuses on the most frequently used words so that pupils will understand the majority of vocabulary they encounter. They are also taught how to use reference resources to unlock new words. A diverse variety of texts including poetry are used in the curriculum to ensure that pupils are exposed to authentic material to read and understand. Audio files, recorded by native speakers, are provided so that pupils hear authentic language.

The second aim is that all pupils should 'speak with increasing confidence, fluency and spontaneity, finding ways of communicating what they want to say, including through discussion and asking questions, and continually improving accuracy of their pronunciation and intonation'. Pupils are taught the sound-symbol correspondences so that they can pronounce the language confidently. Speaking activities give pupils regular opportunities to use language to communicate with increasing fluency. The 'Questions' thread, through which pupils are challenged to ask and answer questions, maps the progression of this important knowledge across the curriculum. Audio files of native speakers can be used by teachers and pupils to improve their spoken accuracy.

Alderwood Academy – KS2 Haven – French Subject Policy

The third aim is that all pupils 'can write at varying length, for different purposes and audiences, using the variety of grammatical structures that they have learnt'. Our curriculum offers regular opportunities to write. In the early stages pupils write shorter texts with a limited range increasing to writing at length using the wide range of grammatical structures mastered over time. For example, in early key stage 2 pupils might write a short list of things they are taking on a trip, through to key stage 4, where pupils write an extending piece discussing stereotypes

The final aim is that all pupils 'discover and develop an appreciation of a range of writing in the language studied'. Pupils encounter writing throughout the curriculum in various forms, from short bespoke sentences to poetry and literary texts.