

Modern Foreign Languages Policy



September 2023

To be reviewed 2025 or as required

Context

“Learning a foreign language is a liberation from insularity and provides an opening to other cultures. A high-quality languages education should foster pupils’ curiosity and deepen their understanding of the world. The teaching should enable pupils to express their ideas and thoughts in another language and to understand and respond to its speakers, both in speech and in writing. It should also provide opportunities for them to communicate for practical purposes, learn new ways of thinking and read great literature in the original language. Language teaching should provide the foundation for learning further languages, equipping pupils to study and work in other countries.

Purpose of study

The main language taught in our school is Spanish, although we also have after school clubs for French. All children from Reception age to Year 6 receive a weekly lesson delivered by a specialist teacher.

Aims and objectives of Primary Languages education at Viridis Schools

- To foster an interest in language learning by introducing children to other languages in a way that is enjoyable and accessible to all pupils.
- To stimulate and encourage children’s curiosity about language, their creativity in using language themselves and their enjoyment of the spoken and written word.
- To support oracy and literacy through the development of listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.
- To support the development of social skills through the various conventions of politeness and good communication (both verbal and non-verbal).
- To support the school’s culture of praise and recognising success by building self-confidence and celebrating learning.
- To encourage enthusiasm for new forms of learning and give an extra dimension to the children’s whole learning experience.
- To help children develop their awareness of cultural similarities and differences and promote a positive attitude towards diversity; and whilst doing so develop a greater understanding of their own lives through the context of exploring the lives of others.
- To ensure progression and recognisable achievement for all pupils.
- To lay solid foundations for future language study by pupils, particularly in the transition to KS3.

Rationale for teaching methods and choice of resources in Primary Languages

Foundation Stage & KS1

Lessons are practical in nature and utilise a range of songs, rhymes and activities to introduce Spanish to young learners. Planning is aided by the division of core vocabulary into topics that are age-appropriate and relevant to the KS1 curriculum e.g. me, my family, my house, my pet, my toys, my clothes, seasons, Easter,

Christmas, the farm, the zoo, kings, castles and magic. Small amounts of new language are introduced in a fun and imaginative way, using puppets, songs, stories and rhymes. Children are physically involved in learning activities by joining in with actions, games, singing and creative activities. The fun activities encourage all children to want to 'play' along. Children hear and copy a good accent from a specialist teacher and recordings on CD or DVD, but enough English is used to ensure that children can sort out their understanding of the new language and engage in dialogue with adults about their new experiences. Our primary linguistic aim at this stage is in the 'training of the ear' and lessons focus on listening and speaking skills. Becoming familiar with the sounds of a foreign language at an early age gives the children an excellent grounding for all future language learning.

KS2

In KS2 language lessons continue to be mainly practical in nature, developing into a more written understanding of the language as children progress.

Individual lesson plans are flexible enough to allow adaptation, but learning outcomes ensure progression in line with the Hackney Education Programme of Study and National Curriculum.

The schemes emphasise 'doing a lot with a little' language and develop good language skills as opposed to simply acquiring lists of words and phrases. The aim is to provide opportunities for children to use newly acquired language in real and relevant situations in school. This best equips the children for a future as language learners and gives them the skills they will need in KS3.

Language is approached and explored in a way that explicitly supports oracy and literacy in English. The use of authentic story books, songs and rhymes makes the language 'come alive' for the children and is accessible to all. The use of authentic, creative resources exposes the children to the rhythm of the language and encourages a love and enjoyment of the spoken and written word. The Hackney Education end of year objectives are used to assess attainment and progress and is used as a vehicle through which children can reflect on their work and achievements.

Teaching and learning languages at Viridis Schools

Language lessons

Although Primary Languages cuts across the curriculum, children are taught specific skills, concepts and vocabulary in a weekly dedicated 20 to 45 minute lesson led by the specialist teacher. The content of these sessions is reinforced or developed by the class teacher, during the week through short practice sessions or 'parcels'.

Languages embedded into other lessons

Where appropriate, teachers give children opportunities to practise their foreign language in the context of lessons in other subject areas. For instance, some instructions may be given in another language in PE, children may count in another language while carrying out a numeracy activity and children have referred to 'bossy verbs' and adverbs in Spanish in a literacy lesson.

Languages across the school

Languages are increasingly becoming a part of the day to day life of the school. Children are encouraged to answer the register by saying 'hello' in a foreign language and some teachers use a foreign language to give simple classroom

instructions. Several class assemblies have been performed in Spanish. The children often experience their teachers gaining new language skills together with them and the teachers are able to act as role models in the learning process. Quality language displays emphasising key vocabulary are expected in every classroom. This creates a positive ethos of language learning for all and gives children the confidence to practice their language.

Intercultural Understanding

In the context of dedicated language lessons, this is a core strand within our chosen scheme of work for KS2. Children 'visit' the country via live web-cam, sing traditional songs, experience the work of Spanish artists and painters and learn about national festivals. The children are also encouraged to think about cultural and linguistic diversity in their own school and community through a series of lessons. They look at things from another's perspective. This strand cuts right across the curriculum and is incorporated into many other subject areas, particularly SEAL, RE, citizenship, geography music and drama. The promotion of intercultural understanding and use of Spanish across the curriculum has been recognised by the British Council through accreditation of the International School Award.

Inclusion

Primary Languages teaching at our schools is fully inclusive. In fact, experience has shown that many less able children derive a particular enjoyment and sense of achievement from taking part in Primary Languages learning activities in which they may be less disadvantaged than in other areas of the curriculum.

Language learning activities are planned in such a way as to encourage the full and active participation of all pupils. Work is differentiated as appropriate to the needs of individual children. Pairs and groups for collaborative work may be made up in different ways, depending on the task.

Staff development

At our schools, we work on a model of coaching and dialogue between specialist and primary class teacher. Teachers and teaching assistants observe and participate in weekly language lessons taught by a specialist teacher. The specialist teacher models language and activities and the class teacher takes a more active role in delivering the lesson as appropriate. There are opportunities to discuss, review and give feedback. The language teacher's role is equally informed by the expertise of the class teacher. The subject leader and head teacher identify school and individual needs and co-ordinate professional development opportunities both in and out of school.

International Links

There are also opportunities to deliver part of the curriculum, have contact with and meet native speakers in school and in their own countries through the school's International links. This is currently taking place under the Erasmus+ Key Action 2 programme.

Monitoring progress and assessing attainment

Opportunities to monitor the children's progress in Primary Languages are built into our programmes of study. Teacher assessment is formative and used to support teaching and learning and inform future planning, considering individual needs as appropriate. Assessments are based on observation of children working on supported speaking, listening reading and writing activities in class and written work.

Our aim is to promote personal responsibility for learning and ownership of the language as the best way to create independent language learners of the future. For reporting purposes, children are commended or given a target based on the four skills of Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing.

Links to Other Policies

- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Learning Environment and Display Policy
- Marking & Feedback Policy
- Inclusion Policy