

# Languages Policy



## Black Firs School

### Introduction

At Black Firs we teach a foreign language 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 also 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.



### Creative Process

Creative Process Learning at Black Firs takes the form of a holistic approach. This means that we pay attention to children's physical, personal, social, emotional and spiritual wellbeing, as well as cognitive aspects of learning. In MFL, learning therefore takes many creative forms and we aim to bring the subject 'alive' in order to capture the many attributes that form our children's holistic development. These include role play, culture studies and more. We aim to ensure that our children experience MFL in as many creative ways as possible, with the intent of being able to become adept in using languages and understanding cultural diversity.

### Intent

The main objective of teaching a modern foreign language in primary school is to promote the early development of a child's linguistic competence. We also want to:

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

### Implementation

#### **Teaching and learning style**

We base the teaching on the guidance material in the QCA scheme of work for modern foreign languages. We have adapted this to the context of our school and the abilities of our children.

We use a variety of techniques to encourage the children to engage actively in the modern foreign language: these include games, role-play and songs (particularly action songs). Whenever possible, we invite native speakers into the classroom, 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.

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.

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.

### **Organisation**

We teach a foreign language to children once per week. A subject specialist usually teaches the foreign language, unless the normal class teacher is a subject specialist too. We also try to involve an expert/native speaker of the foreign language.

### **The Curriculum**

French and Spanish are the modern foreign languages that we teach in our School. The curriculum that we follow is based on the guidance given in the revised National Curriculum and the supplementary guidance published by QCA. We apply the four attainment targets for MFL to Key Stage 2. These are:

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

However, we do not give equal weighting to each of these skills in each unit taught. For example, in the initial stages of our teaching we place particular emphasis on speaking.

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
- work in pairs, and groups to communicate in the other language;
- look at life in another culture.

### ***The contribution of modern foreign languages to teaching in other curriculum areas:***

#### **English**

The learning of a modern 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.

#### **Mathematics**

Children reinforce their time-telling skills by playing time-related games in the foreign language. We play number games, too, that reinforce their counting and calculation skills, expand their understanding of date, and increase their knowledge about money.

#### **Personal, social and health education and citizenship**

One of the main benefits to the children of learning a modern 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.

### ***Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education***

By teaching a modern foreign language we contribute to the children's cultural education. They learn that many societies are multilingual. 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.

### ***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). MFL pupils likewise learn about the climate of the countries in which the language is spoken.

### ***Music***

We teach children songs in the modern foreign language – both traditional and modern – which of course helps them develop a sense of rhythm and an ear for melody.

### ***History***

We teach children about significant historical figures and events in the history of the countries whose language we are studying (e.g. about William the Conqueror in the case of France).

### ***Science***

Children reinforce their knowledge of parts of the body through related games, such as a French version of 'Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes', or through related songs, such as the French-Canadian 'Alouette'.

### ***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.

### ***Computing***

We will use the ICT suite to complete some of our MFL tasks e.g. Research, writing in French.

### **Impact**

#### ***Assessment for learning***

We assess the children in order to ensure that they make good progress in this subject. We do this informally during the lessons. The school uses the four national attainment targets to evaluate the progress of each child, which in turn helps to inform future planning and lessons.

#### ***Cultural Diversity***

The impact of teaching of MFL throughout school is not only to allow children to learn a second language, but also to gain an understanding of cultural diversity. From a young age, children will be exposed to differences from their own culture through the teaching of MFL to broaden their understanding as they move through school.

### **Reporting**

Reporting is done termly through parent meetings.

### **Record Keeping**

Evidence for all year groups is available through Earwig.

### **Children with SEND**

Please refer to the school SEND policy

### ***Modern foreign languages and inclusion***

At our school we teach a modern foreign language to all children, whatever their ability. A modern foreign language forms part of the school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Through our modern 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.

We enable pupils to have access to the full range of activities involved in learning a modern foreign language. Where children are to participate in activities outside the classroom (for example, playing a playground game in a modern foreign language).

### **Equal Opportunities**

Please refer to the School Aims & Statement on Equal Opportunities.

### **Role Of Coordinator**

- The curriculum co-ordinator has a crucial role in planning and monitoring the delivery and development of the MFL curriculum. Please refer to our document detailing the work and responsibilities of all curriculum co-ordinators.
- The coordinator has links with an MFL teacher from our local high school. This partnership would be used for accessing resources and liaising with regards to teaching of MFL.

### **Health & Safety (see also Health & Safety Policy)**

Please refer to the school Health and Safety Policy.

### **Review**

The approach to MFL has been agreed across the school, including governors and is kept under regular review. Any review of the policy will reflect the views of staff, impact in a way that improves the delivery of MFL and be approved by Governors.

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