SPANISH: PROGRESSION OF VOCABULARY

Bredbury Green Primary School | Year 2–Year 6 curriculum companion

Purpose and principles

At Bredbury Green, we recognise that learning a language depends on children hearing, understanding, retrieving and using words and structures repeatedly over time. Vocabulary is therefore taught alongside phonics and grammar so that children can increasingly understand and communicate meaning in spoken and written Spanish.

This document supports our Spanish curriculum and identifies the key language children should know and use as they move through school. It includes academic and linguistic vocabulary that helps children talk about how language works, alongside the Spanish words, phrases and sentence structures they need for practical communication. Vocabulary is deliberately revisited so that children can combine familiar language in increasingly independent ways rather than learning isolated lists of words.

Before Year 2, children develop the listening, attention, rhyme, sound-discrimination and turn-taking skills that support later language learning, but there is no planned Spanish content. In Year 2, children begin a light-touch introduction to Spanish through songs, rhymes and familiar spoken language, preparing them for formal teaching in Key Stage 2.

Across Key Stage 2, phonics, vocabulary and grammar are taught together. Children learn to connect spelling, sound and meaning; ask and answer questions; read and write familiar language; and adapt known words and structures to communicate new ideas with increasing accuracy and confidence.

Whole-school conceptual vocabulary

Concept	Early language (Year 2)	Developing language (Y3–Y6)	Retrieval thread
Listening and responding	listen, hear, copy, repeat, join in, answer	intonation, response, conversation, clarification, audience	listen → repeat → respond → converse → adapt

Sounds and spelling	sound, rhyme, same, different, repeat	phonics, grapheme, phoneme, correspondence, pronunciation, spelling pattern	sound → letter → pattern → decode → pronounce/spell
Words and meaning	word, meaning, name, match	vocabulary, phrase, context, recall, cognate, dictionary	word → phrase → sentence → context → independent choice
Sentence building	word, phrase, question, answer	noun, adjective, article, agreement, word order, structure, punctuation	word → phrase → sentence → adapt structure
Grammar and patterns	pattern, one, more than one, describing word	gender, singular, plural, masculine, feminine, conjugation, tense	notice pattern → apply rule → manipulate structure
Culture and communication	language, Spain, Spanish, song, rhyme	culture, tradition, Día de los Muertos, practical communication	awareness → curiosity → comparison → respectful communication

Vocabulary progression by year group and unit

Year 2 | Preparing for Key Stage 2 Spanish

Curriculum strand: KS1 exposure: listening and language awareness

Tier 2: academic / linguistic vocabulary	Core Spanish: words, phrases and structures
recognise, recall, repeat, pronounce, phrase, question, answer, conversation	familiar greetings, numbers and short repeated phrases from songs and classroom routines

Retrieval and progression: Children move from joining in to recalling some familiar language, preparing for Year 3 work on the Spanish alphabet, phonics, numbers and greeting conversations.

Year 3 | Alphabet, Numbers and Greetings

Curriculum strand: Phonics | Vocabulary

Tier 2: academic / linguistic vocabulary	Core Spanish: words, phrases and structures
alphabet, letter, sound, phonics, spelling, pronunciation, intonation, decode, recall, greeting, phrase, conversation	el alfabeto; uno–veinte; hola, buenos días, buenas tardes, adiós, por favor, gracias; ¿Cómo te llamas? Me llamo…; ¿Cómo estás? Estoy bien/mal; sí, no

Retrieval and progression: Year 3 formalises the sound–spelling relationship. Familiar oral language from KS1 is connected to written forms so pupils can read, pronounce and recall high-frequency words and use them in simple exchanges.

Year 4 | Family, Personal Information and Emotions

Curriculum strand: Phonics | Vocabulary | Grammar

Tier 2: academic / linguistic vocabulary	Core Spanish: words, phrases and structures
grapheme, phoneme, correspondence, decode, unfamiliar, personal information, noun, article, gender, masculine, feminine, singular, plural, adjective, agreement	la familia: madre, padre, hermano, hermana, abuelo, abuela; ¿Quién es? Es…; ¿Cómo te sientes? Me siento feliz/triste/cansado/cansada/enfadado/enfadada; el/los, la/las; vivo en…; tengo … años

Retrieval and progression: Pupils apply established sound patterns to less familiar vocabulary and begin to explain grammatical gender and adjective agreement. Questions and answers extend from greetings into information about themselves and others.

Year 5 | Colours, Food, Animals and Description

Curriculum strand: Phonics | Vocabulary | Grammar

Tier 2: academic / linguistic vocabulary	Core Spanish: words, phrases and structures
pronunciation, convention, quantity, description, sentence order, adjective placement, agreement, punctuation, adapt, text, context	colores: rojo/roja, azul, verde, amarillo/amarilla, negro/negra, blanco/blanca; comida: pan, queso, fruta, manzana, agua; animales: perro, gato; ¿Qué…? ¿Dónde…?; un/una, dos/tres…; quantity + food + colour; noun + adjective

Retrieval and progression: Children reuse gender and agreement while learning that descriptive words commonly follow the noun in Spanish. Familiar vocabulary is combined in new sentences and identified within short spoken and written texts.

Year 6 | Food, Preferences and Día de los Muertos

Curriculum strand: Phonics | Vocabulary | Grammar | Culture

Tier 2: academic / linguistic vocabulary	Core Spanish: words, phrases and structures
independent, adapt, preference, opinion, communicate, context, verb, present, past, future, culture, tradition, symbolism	comida: further familiar and new food vocabulary; ¿Qué quieres? Quiero…; ¿Te gusta…? Me gusta… / No me gusta…; me gustó…; me va a gustar…; ¿Quién? ¿Qué? ¿Dónde? ¿Cuándo? ¿Por qué?; Día de los Muertos, familia, ofrenda, flores, calavera

Retrieval and progression: Pupils draw together phonics, vocabulary and grammar to sustain simple practical exchanges, especially around food and preferences. They adapt familiar structures and explore how verb forms can communicate across different time frames.

Phonics and grammar vocabulary progression

Stage	Phonics / sound language	Grammar / structure language	What pupils increasingly do
Year 2	sound, rhyme, listen, repeat	word, phrase, question, answer	Notice, imitate and remember sounds and short spoken language.
Year 3	alphabet, phonics, spelling pattern, pronunciation, intonation, decode	phrase, sentence, question, response	Link spelling, sound and meaning; read and say familiar words and phrases.
Year 4	grapheme, phoneme, grapheme–phoneme correspondence, decoding	noun, article, gender, masculine, feminine, singular, plural, adjective, agreement	Apply phonics to unfamiliar words and build accurate simple sentences.
Year 5	sound–spelling convention, accurate pronunciation	word order, adjective placement, agreement, punctuation, sentence structure	Adapt familiar structures and describe with increasing grammatical accuracy.

Year 6	independent spelling and pronunciation checking	verb, conjugation, tense/time frame, past, present, future	Manipulate known language to express preferences, information and ideas more independently.

UNCRC connections

Spanish supports children's understanding of language, culture and communication and can contribute naturally to Article 29 (education should develop respect for other cultures), Article 30 (the right to use one's own language and culture), Article 13 (the right to seek, receive and share information and ideas) and Article 12 (the right to express views and be heard). These links should arise through meaningful language and cultural learning rather than being treated as additional content.

Suggested retrieval routines

- Daily oral retrieval: revisit a small number of previously taught words or sentence stems through call-and-response, questioning or partner talk.
- Sound–spelling retrieval: display a familiar grapheme or word and ask pupils to predict or explain its pronunciation before reading aloud.
- Cumulative questioning: reuse earlier question forms and answers when introducing new vocabulary so that new content sits within familiar structures.
- Sentence substitution: keep a familiar sentence frame and change one element, such as the noun, adjective, quantity or preference.
- Listening retrieval: include familiar language within short spoken passages so pupils identify known words in a less familiar context.
- Low-stakes written retrieval: use short dictation, matching, gap-fill or write-from-memory tasks before pupils adapt language independently.

What progression should look like

Phase	Vocabulary and communication	Phonics and reading	Grammar and independence
Year 2	Encounter Spanish through songs, rhymes, greetings and repeated oral language.	Attend to sounds and rhythm and begin to recognise familiar spoken forms.	Copy and recall short forms without formal grammatical teaching.
Lower KS2	Recall core vocabulary and use familiar phrases to exchange simple personal information.	Use Spanish sound–spelling patterns to read familiar and increasingly unfamiliar words.	Build simple sentences and begin to apply gender, articles and adjective agreement.
Upper KS2	Select and combine a wider vocabulary to describe, ask questions, express preferences and respond to texts.	Apply phonics with increasing independence to pronunciation, reading and spelling.	Adapt sentence structures, apply word order and agreement, and begin to manipulate familiar verb forms across time frames.

Implementation notes

- Teach Spanish vocabulary as usable language, not as isolated lists. New words should quickly be placed into phrases, questions or sentence structures.
- Pronunciation should be modelled accurately and revisited frequently. Written vocabulary should be connected deliberately to its sound and meaning.
- Protect cumulative learning: previously taught greetings, question forms, numbers, descriptions and grammatical patterns should continue to appear in later units.

- Teach the English linguistic terms pupils need to discuss language, while ensuring lesson time remains focused on understanding and communicating in Spanish.
- Use visual support, gesture, songs, rehearsal and sentence stems to make language accessible, gradually reducing support as recall becomes secure.
- Where cultural content is taught, avoid presenting a single celebration or tradition as representative of all Spanish-speaking people. Use it as an opportunity to develop curiosity and respectful cultural understanding.
- Assessment should consider what pupils can understand and communicate using familiar language, as well as whether they can retrieve individual words accurately.