Seaton Valley High School

French Curriculum Overview

What are the aims of the French curriculum?
In French we believe that the acquisition of languages opens the door to other cultures and experiences and we encourage our students to develop a curiosity for the wider world. We aim to equip our students with the knowledge and skills necessary to enable them to seek adventure and embrace new horizons and become global citizens. Our teachers are experts who work collaboratively and cohesively to deliver fast paced, dynamic and challenging lessons. The key knowledge that we teach and embed in terms of vocabulary, grammar, tenses and accurate sentence structure equips our students with what they need to achieve outstanding outcomes and become independent learners, prepared for further study or employment. Using more than one language is a skill of the highest order and using this sound knowledge base, we develop the core communication skills of listening, reading, speaking and writing through challenging content and contexts. Literacy and oracy are at the heart of everything we do. To develop skills and retain knowledge effectively our learners must be active, engaged and demonstrate commitment to their education, whilst showing resilience and resourcefulness to fulfil our unforgivably high standards. The classroom environment is essential in the delivery of our curriculum and we aim to make sure it is purposeful, positive and supportive as we develop confidence and nurture new talents. We recognise that languages extend outside the classroom and we value the importance of an extra-curricular programme that enables students to consolidate and extend their linguistic competence and enrich their social and cultural experiences with our visits and excursions in our aim to educate the whole child.

How does the French curriculum support the Seaton Valley Federation's curriculum vision and intent?
We have developed our curriculum with the key aim of interesting our pupils and to develop a curiosity in them about the French language and the culture. Our lessons are meticulously planned to include a whole range of tasks to appeal to all learners. We constantly research and keep up to date with the latest trends and ideology in French teaching to seek new ideas and activities to engage our learners. We include pair work and group work tasks and involve games and competitive challenges to drive progress. We look to include different activities across a topic and within our four skills and employ different strategies to introduce and consolidate key knowledge. We involve French music in our activities and use the most recent websites and Apps within lessons and to encourage independence and further linguistic competence at home. We plan for all students to succeed and achieve their potential and are keen for our students to challenge themselves and aim highly. We include red and green tasks, where possible to enable students to feel like they are making progress and challenge tasks are offered in most of our activities to push the most able and our keenest students. The varying use of vocabulary sheets allows extra support, scaffolding and challenge. Our students are rewarded for their successes and we believe in creating a positive ethos in our lessons and a learning environment where everyone feels like they can succeed. From Year 7 to Year 13, our students are resilient and uninhibited and so are not afraid to make mistakes and to learn from them. They seek and establish patterns, can deduce and use logic to make intelligent guesses and are self-confident. They learn to use context to establish meaning, accept some uncertainty and are flexible in their approach.

Each PowerPoint that we use to help structure our lessons highlights clearly which aspect of LINC is being covered so that we reinforce this each lesson with our students.

LITERACY

Everything we do in French concerns literacy - it is at the heart of learning a foreign language. We develop reading, listening, speaking and writing skills through a whole range of practice tasks that invariably involve comprehension skills. We read texts to gain a deeper understanding of key knowledge, we listen to authentic French voices and complete exercises to consolidate key vocabulary and grammar and through speaking and writing tasks, we put into practice and use independently the aspects of language that we have acquired.

INDEPENDENCE

Our focus is to develop confident and independent linguists and through our cycle of introduce, practice and produce, our aim in all sections of the curriculum and at all key stages is for pupils to use new structures and vocabulary independently. Every lesson and every topic is crafted to develop and reward independence and our students take huge pride in producing their own French sentences, paragraphs and creative work.

NUMERACY

We seek opportunities in our curriculum to develop numeracy skills. Every lesson, pupils write the date in French and we use numbers throughout our topics and themes. In Year 7, we introduce pupils to basic numbers up to 60 and part of our practice tasks are basic arithmetic processes, number problèmes and recognising patterns. We learn how to tell the time in French and use numbers to explain age and quantities. This is developed in Year 8 with larger numbers up to and beyond 100 and we continue to use numbers in quantities, dates and times. We also learn about currency and how to understand and give prices in Euros. In Year 9, we consolidate these further and learn how to talk about wages. Across Key Stage 4 and 5, our use of numbers progresses further to explain statistics and trends related to our topics and themes.

CULTURE

We have built opportunities into our lessons, frequently in starter tasks to discuss cultural aspects relevant to our topics. We have sought the latest data and facts about what it is like to be a teenager in France and regularly use these as discussion points, which our students find interesting. In Key Stage 4 and 5 we use authentic texts more frequently and expose our students to a wider range of source material. At A Level we study a French book and a film and part of the syllabus is to examine social and cultural factors that influenced the production of the work. We also have a school Twitter account and we post cultural information, news updates and other information which we believe our students will enjoy. We organise trips to further enhance our students' experiences of language and society.

How is the French curriculum sequenced to support pupils to make effective progress?

We begin in Year 7 with a wide variety of vocabulary that helps pupils build a personal picture and talk about things that really interest them as we learn to describe family and friends, explain our school day and hobbies plus the area we live in and our holiday preferences. In Year 8 and 9 we develop and use an increasingly wide-ranging and deepening vocabulary that goes beyond the immediate needs and interests of the students, allowing them to give and justify opinions and take part in discussion about wider issues such as health and the environment. They are subsequently and more consistently challenged and encouraged to cope with unfamiliar language and unexpected responses.

In Key Stage 4, we deal with three distinct themes which cover identity and culture, local, national, international and global areas of interest and current and future study and employment. Students are expected to understand and provide information and opinions about these themes relating to their own experiences and those of other people, including people in countries/communities where our native language is spoken.

Evidently, our French content is delivered through a spiral curriculum so that students revisit key themes with increasing complexity so that the language is constantly reinforced, solidified and extended. We interleave vocabulary content and grammatical theory and use spaced learning and retrieval practice to increase the storage strength of knowledge. Our students are constantly involved in active practice, consolidation and reflection in order to cement deep learning whilst frequent low stakes testing enables the transfer of knowledge into long term memory.
There is a strong grammar focus in everything we do and pupils learn to use and manipulate a variety of key structures and patterns as concepts are introduced and recycled within each module and then through the course whilst they learn to communicate more independently in the foreign language. Pupils learn quickly to identify and use tenses or other structures which convey the present, past, and future. Pupils learn to write at varying length, for different purposes and audiences using and manipulating a variety of key grammatical structures and patterns that they have learnt.
They understand and respond to spoken and written language from a variety of increasingly authentic sources and they speak with increasing confidence, fluency and spontaneity, continually improving the accuracy of their pronunciation and intonation
They show comprehension of original and adapted materials from a range of different sources, understanding the purpose, important ideas and details, and provide an accurate English translation of short, suitable material. They read extracts from literary texts in the language such as stories, songs, poems and letters to stimulate ideas, develop creative expression and expand understanding of the language and culture and so learn new ways of thinking.
Our ultimate aim in Key Stage 5 is for our students to use the spoken and written language spontaneously. At this level, they engage with themes directly relevant to social and cultural issues in the relevant country(ies) such as immigration, changes to family structures, the influence of the media and new technologies and sexual equality. They engage critically with literary works and films and there is a much increased focus on critical and analytical thinking in the language of study. They embrace the requirement to carry out independent research and present their findings on topics of their choice and interest.

How is assessment used to aid progress?

Assessment for Learning strategies are employed throughout our curriculum to enable teachers to check on progress, address key misconceptions and influence our future planning. We use mini whiteboards, traffic lights, thumbs up and confidence levels as examples of such strategies. Plenaries are often challenging tasks which require pupils to reflect upon the learning that has occurred during the lesson and what they have achieved. We use retrieval practice tasks and quizzes as Starter activities and these demand that pupils recall language from previous lessons, topics or sequences of learning. Self-quizzing is a skill we look to develop with our students, especially in Key Stage 4 and 5.
Formative assessment occurs across lessons as we develop our four skills and this allows us to address gaps in knowledge and assess which skills require further development.
Summative assessment tasks are highlighted in our Scheme of Work and these involve students' responses to tasks set at the end of the introduce, practice, produce cycle. We mark according to our Faculty policy with feedback given to students via What Went Well and Even Better If. We pride ourselves on giving immediate and individualised feedback to our pupils which is designed to improve overall attainment. Our targets are often phrased as questions to encourage students to think more deeply about their performance and how to improve.
End of Module tests enable us to assess students' understanding and overall achievement in all skills and we mark according to the criteria set by Dynamo 1, 2 and 3 coursebooks. We target set following these assessments.
We use previous exam questions and papers in Year 10 / 12 exams and Year 11 / 13 trial exams to assess progress and attainment and complete individual target setting to fine tune exam

technique and performance. We offer a revision programme to fully support our students in their preparation for final exams.

How is staffing organised within French?

2026-2027:

- KS3 (Years 7 + 8) French is taught by Tanya White and Liz Lacey
- KS3 (Year 9) French is taught by Tanya White and Liz Lacey
- KS4 (Year 10) French is taught by Tanya White and Liz Lacey
- KS4 (Year 11) French is taught by Tanya White and Liz Lacey
- KS5 (Year 12) French is taught by Tanya White and Liz Lacey

Examined courses – exam board and course code (exams and controlled assessment elements)

- GCSE French: AQA - 8658
- A level French: AQA - 7652