

Statement of Intent – What we want our children to gain from French lessons

We are ambitious for our pupils and offer them the opportunity to stretch their wings academically and culturally by teaching them French. Learning French is about more than memorising vocabulary and understanding grammatical terms. It is an insight into the lives of people who live at a distance and who do things differently. It is a tantalising glimpse into the mysterious nature of a world beyond our physical horizons.

“Do you know what a foreign accent is? It’s a sign of bravery.” Amy Chua

All pupils learn French. From Reception they follow a structured programme of lessons which are designed to enable them to speak confidently in French in social situations and to gain an understanding of how languages work. We encourage children to bring their knowledge of other languages with them to the classroom and to explore the sounds of say, Polish or Spanish. We want to stimulate children’s curiosity about language and to inspire a lifelong interest in learning the language of others.

“Learn a language and you’ll avoid a war.” Arab proverb

We recognise that speaking a foreign language, whether Japanese, Russian or Swedish, is deeply enriching and gratifying. Children of primary age are hard-wired to absorb language almost effortlessly and it is our intention to provide interactive and enjoyable lessons each week which build on previous learning so that when the children leave St Michael’s they are already well versed in the basics of the language and have had many opportunities to speak, listen to, read and write in French. We use a variety of media such as songs, culturally enriching videos, stories, poems, role play and games to assist the learning of French.

“A man who knows two languages is worth two men.” French proverb

We plan using the National Curriculum as a starting point. In addition, we use a range of materials such as Eric Carle’s ‘La Chenille qui fait des Trous’ (‘The Very Hungry Caterpillar’), and Ours Brun (Brown Bear) as well as traditional tales such as ‘Les Trois Petits Cochons’ (‘The Three Little Pigs’). To provide snapshots of life in France, we use Early Start French, a series of videos which shows children in northern France talking about themselves and their families. Year on year children revisit known language and build on it in a structured and rigorous way.

“Knowledge of languages is the doorway to wisdom.” Roger Bacon

BIG IDEAS

COMMUNICATION - I am a linguist because I **communicate** by listening, speaking, reading and writing with other people. I also know that I can understand how another person is feeling by looking at them.

WORLD CITIZENSHIP - I am a linguist because I behave as a **world citizen**, understanding that other people speak different languages and I am curious to learn more about them. I respect diversity and know that everybody is unique.

EXPLORATION – I am a linguist because I **explore** new words, sounds and spelling systems. This extends my language and helps me to understand how languages work.