

FRENCH CURRICULUM DESIGN

"TO HAVE
ANOTHER
LANGUAGE IS
TO POSSESS A
SECOND
SOUL"
- CHARLEMAGNE



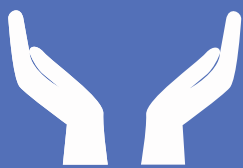
KNOWING



French is a rich language, the history of which is bound to the UK since the Norman period. In studying French therefore, children are helped to see cognates and similarities between a language which at first glance seems entirely different from English. In addition, since we receive pupils from all over the country (and, indeed, the world), we chose a language which is frequently taught in Primary schools to try to offer pupils who move around consistency in their study; our main feeder secondary also teaches French in KS3. We use an adapted scheme of learning (Kapow French) to support pupils with acquiring knowledge and confidence in French. The scheme returns to key concepts cyclically over the years, meaning pupils who join part-way through the Key Stage still cover all aspects.

The knowledge required in acquiring a new language is complex. We seek to introduce pupils to 4 key domains - speaking and pronunciation, listening, reading and writing, and grammar. Through these, pupils are introduced progressively to the key concepts of language: new vocabulary, the phonetic code of French (and its differences from English), and the way the language is constructed grammatically. Often, words and phrases are introduced receptively initially to anchor these in children's minds before they are required to use them productively. We recognise that with our mobile context, pupils may not have totally secure subject knowledge from previous years, but endeavour to introduce new knowledge progressively and establish prior learning in order to begin to build generative knowledge in each domain. Lastly, we equip children with two other areas of knowledge which complement the core learning of the language - detective skills (including cognate recognition, use of context to make predictions etc.) and intercultural understanding to help pupils embed their language learning in a wider societal awareness.

BECOMING



Learning isolated vocabulary lists or information about grammatical agreement alone does not make a competent linguist. We therefore provide pupils with ongoing opportunities to put their learning into practice - whether through simple phrases embedded in the school day (thus making the language purposeful), or through structured opportunities within lessons (e.g. basic conversations, writing simple sentences, paired discussions or extracting meaning from written text). Thus, pupils will start to become linguists, drawing on the fundamental knowledge they are acquiring as they practise its use. To avoid overloading pupils' working memory, children will initially produce shorter words and phrases before tackling more complex sentences and developing automaticity.

FEELING



There is nothing like the sense of accomplishment that children experience when they can confidently use a new language - even if only in the early stages; it's like unlocking a secret code or gaining a whole new form of communication. The domain of 'intercultural understanding' within the curriculum also offers pupils the chance to discover similarities and differences between French culture and our own, and to avoid stereotypes. We also work in partnership with the local High School to offer specific French experience days where the children immerse themselves in Francophonie and enjoy using and extending their learning. Through studying a new language, we aim for pupils to be inspired to continue such learning in future, whether in French or another language - many of our children have lived abroad with the military, and we want to open their minds to the prospects of further travels in their future.