

NHGS - MFL - Curriculum Intent, Implementation and Impact

Intent (Aims and purpose)

We aim to create the very best linguists by challenging students to think, act and speak like those working in the field would. We do this by equipping all our students with the knowledge and skills to thrive and succeed in language learning; encouraging and inspiring them with quality teaching, broadening their awareness of other countries and communities and providing opportunities for participation in a broad range of linguistic and cultural educational experiences.

Our curriculum at NHGS goes far beyond what is taught in lessons, for whilst we want students to achieve the very best examination results possible, we believe our curriculum goes beyond what is examinable. Our students in Year 8 benefit from the opportunity of the educational visit to France, which being cross-curricular in nature, offers an experience which is not only linguistic but which supports and promotes many other areas of the curriculum.

As a department, we offer a broad range of opportunities beyond lessons; for example, participation and repeated success by KS3 students in national competitions organised by Routes into Languages Spelling Bee (Yr 7) and Translation Bee (Yr 9), and for sixth form MFL students, participation in national and international competitions. In 2019, competing in the *Juvenes Translatores* competition, one of our students was commended for his translation and invited down to spend the day with professional translators at the EU headquarters in London. During the 2021 lockdown, we organised enrichment and support for our Yr 11 and Yr 12 MFL students by inviting undergraduates from the University of Leeds to give online lessons through the *Linguists into Schools* programme and always encourage our students to take part in the Linguistars residential MFL programme.

We actively encourage students to connect with native speakers: employing Foreign Language Assistants to work with students at KS5; and organising letter exchanges and video presentations with pen-friends in French and Spanish speaking countries. Events such as the Yr12 French hip-hop and graffiti culture afternoon with Gecko Ciocca from Nîmes also bring languages alive.

Our curriculum in MFL forms a backbone to our ethos statement. Through teacher modelling, we encourage our students to be well-mannered, thoughtful and mindful of others and our enthusiastic and encouraging approach is mirrored in the engagement and enthusiasm shown by our students.

Our knowledge-engaged curriculum underpins and enables the application of skills. As a department we carefully plan progression through our curriculum with regular revisiting of content and skills to build on existing knowledge. From the outset we teach grammar, phonics and vocabulary; using the correct terminology and making explicit links to English and other foreign languages' grammatical structures, pronunciation and cognates.

We expand the Cultural Capital of our students by embedding their linguistic acquisition within a wide range of knowledge which goes beyond their own cultural experience and sets them up as intercultural citizens. We do this by teaching language contextually within topic areas and using target language to model and encourage students to communicate in the foreign language. We use authentic resources to offer immediacy and relevance to the MFL learning experience. Study of foreign language films, music, YouTube videos and texts are

all commonplace in the MFL classroom. The Language Immersion Challenge set up for KS4 students to research aspects of youth culture in French/ Spanish countries and communities over a holiday was successful in sparking an interest in foreign language cultures.

Further rationale behind our curriculum design includes the revisiting and building on existing knowledge. The topic areas and grammatical structures which are introduced at KS3, are seen as building blocks for more in-depth learning at KS4 (& KS5) and the use of IT programmes such as Language Perfect and Languagenut are well-established for reinforcing newly acquired knowledge or for setting lagged homework for supporting longer term memory

Implementation

Collaborative curriculum planning lies at the heart of what we do in the department. We introduced new courses in Yr 7 in both Spanish and French in September 2020. With students joining us from approximately 100 different primary schools, our aims are; to build confidence in spoken language, introduce the foundations of grammatical understanding and promote engagement and motivation in the subjects *ab initio*.

In order to help students with MFL transition between KS2 and KS3, we conduct an MFL lesson with all Yr 6 students on Transition day and encourage them to complete a transition booklet over the summer holidays, containing familiar themes, vocabulary lists, linked activities, a memory challenge and suggestions for further practice and Youtube links that also help with pronunciation. Students are awarded with credits by their new Year 7 MFL teacher on completion of the booklet. Unfortunately, Transition Day 2020 and 2021 did not take place, due to Covid restrictions.

We are now in the second year of the new KS3 MFL curriculum delivering both languages in Y7. To help mitigate the impact of lockdown, we are reinforcing key content, particularly grammar, and with the careful sequencing of topics and structures, regular formative assessment and many opportunities for spiralling back, we are seeing students' knowledge and understanding progressing and their confidence returning.

Schemes of work are clearly focused on language acquisition and we are developing resources for expanding our teaching of phonics. Alongside our new schemes of work in Years 7 & 8, we have introduced knowledge organisers, enabling us to define and share the core knowledge that we want our students to master.

We have introduced a KS4 tutoring programme from October 2021, using external tutors whom we know and who are working currently with small groups of Yr 11 students. Later in the academic year, we aim to transfer this external support to students in Yr 10 and will continue to offer Yr 11 support internally in preparation for the GCSE examinations. We have also set up a student support programme, using Yr 12 students and staff to reinforce learning.

In recent years, we have worked on KS4 schemes of work and we will be completing KS5 by the end of the academic year 2021-22. These are focused on embedding challenge, metacognition, memory techniques and literacy into our existing departmental curriculum. We also implement our curriculum through using a variety of teaching approaches and tasks which encompass the four key skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Impact

We know our curriculum is working in the MFL department through the engagement of students throughout the school, both observed and recorded in student voice. The quality of teaching and learning in MFL has been praised consistently during learning walks by both external and internal observers. At KS5 we are one of the very few schools in Calderdale to continue to offer 2 A Level MFL courses and the only school to offer weekly FLA lessons to KS5 MFL students. Our sixth form students are keen to get fully involved in supporting younger students, both in MFL lessons and in offering lunchtime support to individuals and small groups.

Many of the students who study A Level MFL courses choose to continue studying foreign languages at University, either as a full degree or as a module, with many going to Russell group universities including Oxbridge. Our former NHGS students are frequently invited back to share their experiences of university, their year abroad and subsequent careers. These students always tell us how well-prepared they felt in languages for life beyond school and how easy they found their language courses in the first year.

MFL results at NHGS were judged Sig+ for VA scores for 3 consecutive years and in the last set of external examinations held in 2019, our A level results in both French and Spanish were amongst the highest in the school.

Most importantly, students frequently express their enjoyment of the lessons and the subject: mentioning the quality of the teaching, the support and the opportunities from which they have benefitted.