



MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES (MFL)

Curriculum Intent, Implementation and Impact

Intent

We aim to create the very best linguists and linguaphiles. Developing strong linguistic knowledge and encouraging positive attitudes towards language learning are key to our curriculum. The importance of learning languages is reflected in the school curriculum where all students learn two modern foreign languages from Yr 7, allowing a choice of 1 or 2 languages to take to GCSE and A level. Through our curriculum design, we want our students to be able to communicate confidently, knowing they are equipped with the knowledge and skills to succeed. We encourage our students to be inquisitive learners who ask questions, make linguistic links and gain personal satisfaction by making language work for them. We aim to inspire our students 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. We seek to share with our students our enthusiasm for our subject and develop in them a lifelong passion for the learning of languages and cultures which can enrich their lives.

Our knowledge-engaged curriculum underpins and enables the application of skills. As a department we plan careful progression through our curriculum with regular revisiting of content and skills to build on existing knowledge. The French and Spanish courses introduce language through topic areas; each unit of work comprising a series of sequenced lessons which focus on a defined set of vocabulary and develop specific grammatical structures. The course content is carefully designed to spiral back so as to reinforce and build on existing knowledge with progression determined principally by the understanding and correct application of grammatical principals within a communicative framework. From the outset we are explicit in our teaching of grammar; using correct terminology and making clear comparisons with English and the other MFL being taught. By the end of the first year of study, we would expect students to be able, for example, to conjugate the full paradigm of regular and common irregular verbs in the present tense. In Yr 8, students are introduced to the past and future tenses and by the end of the KS3 course, they are able to identify and use 3-time frames with increasing confidence, as they approach the start of the 2-year GCSE course. 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 *Education Perfect* and *Languagenut* are well-established for reinforcing newly acquired knowledge, or for setting lagged homework for supporting longer term memory.

Our schemes of work are planned collaboratively and subject content carefully chosen to allow for appropriate pace, reinforcement and progression. Vocabulary is selected judiciously and is built up gradually; initially re-introducing familiar sets of vocabulary from KS2 and focusing on themes which allow students to understand and communicate personal and factual information. Many vocabulary items are high frequency words, including simple opinions and justifications, common verbs and adjectives which are taught and re-visited several times over through KS3 and KS4. New vocabulary is introduced both orally and in written form and

pronunciation rules highlighted. By the end of Yr 7, we would expect students to be able to talk about themselves and their lives and express opinions with reasons. We build up vocabulary and syntax progressively in Yr 8 so that by the end of KS3, students will be able to use a greater variety of vocabulary to express personal and factual information that goes beyond their immediate needs and interests. They will be able to develop and justify points of view in speech and writing, with increased spontaneity, independence and accuracy.

In recent years, we have worked on KS4 schemes of work and are working on KS5. Our schemes of work seek to embed challenge, metacognition, memory techniques and literacy within 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.

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, we take KS3 students to regional and national competitions organised by Routes into Languages, accompany our sixth form MFL students to film study days and promote opportunities for them to participate independently in university-based events, such as the *Linguastars* residential programme at Leeds University and the Translation Competition, organised by the University of Sheffield. We actively encourage students to connect with native speakers: employ Foreign Language Assistants to work with students at KS5; as well as organising letter exchanges and video presentations with pen-friends in French and Spanish speaking countries for some younger classes.

Implementation

All students at NHGS are taught by qualified MFL teachers who all teach their specialist language(s). With a wealth of teaching experience in the department, MFL staff are highly skilled in communicating expert knowledge of the language(s) they teach. A typical MFL lesson will be carefully planned, enabling students to understand and practise key areas of grammar, vocabulary and syntax through a sequence of tasks, building up their linguistic competence through spoken and written language. Memory strategies are routinely used to help embed language in longer term memory and formative assessment is an integral part of lessons. Students are actively engaged in their own learning; sometimes working in pairs and marking their own work in green pen as they compare their own work with the teacher's modelled answer. Common misconceptions are addressed by the teacher as they arise and students are often asked to clarify and expand on verbal answers through differentiated questioning.

We are now developing our KS3 MFL curriculum delivering both languages from Yr 7. As part of our recovery programme, 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. Alongside our new schemes of work in Yr7 & Yr8, we have introduced knowledge organisers, enabling us to define and share the core knowledge that we want our students to master. In preparation for the new MFL subject content, we will be developing resources for expanding our teaching of phonics.

With the KS2 MFL experience being so varied across the 100 or so different primary schools we draw on, we help students with MFL transition by conducting an MFL lesson during Transition day. The lesson is designed to be active, fun and collaborative and includes games,

quizzes and competitions, all introduced through the target language. Students are encouraged to complete a transition booklet over the summer holidays which contains familiar themes, vocabulary lists, linked activities, a memory challenge, and suggestions for further practice such as Youtube links to help with pronunciation. Students are rewarded with achievement comments by their new Year 7 MFL teacher on completion of the booklet.

We have introduced a KS4 tutoring programme, using external tutors who are working very successfully with small groups of GCSE MFL students. We have also set up a student support programme, using Yr 12 students to support younger students both in class and at lunchtimes. During 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. Events such as the Yr12 French hip-hop and graffiti culture afternoon with Gecko Ciocca from Nîmes add to the cultural dimension of learning languages at NHGS.

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 A level results in both French and Spanish are often amongst the highest in the school. 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.

Students continue to show their knowledge and language abilities through their success in national competitions. Year 9 students have on several occasions represented the school in the National Final of Translation Bee at Cambridge University and one of our sixth form students, competing in the *Juvenes Translatores* competition, was commended for his translation and invited down to spend the day with professional translators at the EU headquarters in London.

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.