

NHGS – MFL - Curriculum Intent, Implementation and Impact

Intent (Aims and purpose)

We aim to create the very best Linguists. We challenge 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 first 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. All our students in Year 8 benefit from 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 (Yr7) and Translation Bee (Yr 9), and for sixth form MFL students the International EU translation competition *Juvenes Translatores* where in 2019, 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. We actively encourage students to connect with native speakers: employing Foreign Language Assistants to work with students at KS4 and 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 bring languages alive.

Our curriculum in MFL forms a backbone to our ethos statement. Examples of how our curriculum supports the ethos statement are through a range of activities that promote student curiosity, confidence and collaborative thinking. 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.

As a knowledge engaged curriculum we believe that knowledge underpins and enables the application of skills; both are entwined. As a department we define the powerful knowledge our students need and help them recall it by having a carefully planned progression through our curriculum with content and skills clearly defined in our schemes of work which revisit and build on existing knowledge. We are very clear from the outset that we teach grammatical structures, syntax and vocabulary; using the correct terminology and making explicit links to English and other foreign languages' grammatical structures and vocabulary.

We build the Cultural Capital of our students by embedding their linguistic acquisition within a framework which introduces them to 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, particularly through the Internet to offer immediacy and authenticity 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 the summer holidays has been 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 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 are committed to a three-year plan of developing our schemes of work. In 2019/2020 we are working on KS4 schemes of work. These are focussed on embedding challenge, metacognition, memory techniques and literacy into our departmental curriculum

Alongside our schemes of work, we are developing knowledge organisers at KS3. This is enabling us to define the core knowledge our students need to master.

In MFL, 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 our numbers for our A level MFL courses within a national context are high.

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. 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.

In recent years, MFL results at NHGS have been judged Sig+ for VA scores on 3 consecutive years and 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.