

Subject Curriculum Intent: Modern Foreign Languages

Definition of Subject

William Blake once wrote, “If the doors of perception were cleansed, everything would appear to us as it is, infinite. For we have closed ourselves up ’til we see all the narrow chinks of our cavern.” This powerful statement was an invitation for the human race to break through the borders of our perceptions and expand into another world. Blake’s comment about the “doors of perception” is an observation about how we see and relate to the world around us. Through his work, he sought to alter both how man understands and experiences the world.

Humankind is dependent on language for communication and expression of their thoughts and needs, and language has its own forms and basis that play an imperative role in human life. Although languages can vary across the globe, its role remains central in our day-to-day lives and in a critical conversation on languages and ethics, British philosopher Wittgenstein defended the idea that “the limits of [one’s] language meant the limits of [one’s] world.”

It is through the study of Modern Foreign Languages that pupils will forge the linguistic keys of communicating with precision through reading, writing, listening and speaking in another language. Furthermore, pupils will unlock doors, deepening their understanding of different countries’ history, literature, and arts; and most importantly consider their own identity and place in the world.

Nature of subject

Knowledge in MFL can be broadly separated into the following areas: knowledge of grammar concepts and lexicon (language structure); knowledge of phonetic systems; knowledge of linguistic and literary contexts throughout time; and, knowledge of the powerful themes and social issues. Within these areas, pupils develop a knowledge of the language itself – how to construct and deconstruct it, how to produce it, and how to combine elements of it to produce new utterances, answer new questions in various contexts.

Pupils are developing linguistic competence through four main skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing, and the use of the target language by students is encouraged from the very start in order to lay strong foundations at KS3 level. This takes place through a variety of contexts and with the support of authentic materials to develop their cultural capital. Pupils will be able to analyse the language within a cultural context to develop their confidence, lexicon and grammatical foundations in order to express their ideas and opinions, to seek information and to respond to speakers of the language they study.

Pupils will be able to examine individual texts closely, while appreciating how they contribute to the broad domains of language and literature. For example, they may analyse the use of metaphors and idioms and discuss the topic of racism in Leopold Senghor’s *Mon Cher Frere Blanc (My Dear White Brother)*, while recognising how this text contributes to the question of social injustice and racism in the French-speaking world. At KS5 level, they may redefine the role of women in France in Faïza

Guène's *Kiffe kiffe Demain (Love, Love tomorrow)* while analysing the differences between classical French literature and North African Francophone Literature.

Using the English language as a backbone, pupils will encounter threshold concepts such as that:

- Grammar: Understanding that nouns have a gender and agree with adjectives in gender and number; conjugation of verbs in a variety of tenses to develop the student's speaking, writing, reading and listening skills. skills , (3 groups) Verbs endings in present tense Word order (Adjective after
- The use of language, including their own, can affect readers and audiences in different ways.
- Context in translation matters: a word can convey a different meaning depending on the nature of the text and the audience; the idea that a key message in a text cannot always be accurately transposed in English at times and requires a cultural understanding and the use of idioms.
- The use of language with accuracy; language structure must be adjusted and adapted to the audience to convey a clear message.

Purpose of Subject

The purpose of Modern Foreign Languages as a subject is multifaceted. Not only does it intend to provide an open road to the world and a vehicle for overcoming educational disadvantage, but it also promotes pupils' curiosity and deepen their understanding of different countries' people, culture, history, literature and arts. We challenge pupils to consider their own identity and place in the world and to appreciate and empathise with different ways of seeing the world. We aim to equip pupils with the confidence that allows them to express their ideas and opinions, to seek information and to respond to speakers of the language across the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. By developing pupils' linguistic, communicative and intercultural skills, we strive to foster rounded individuals ready for entry into a global world and enabling them to pursue and seize their greatness.

At Ark Blake we know that the study of a foreign language helps pupils develop a sense of cultural pluralism, an openness to and appreciation of other cultures leading them to seize greatness. In a globalised world characterised by international links and intercultural connections, linguistic knowledge and language skills are more than ever crucial for personal growth and social mobility.

Our pupils are being moulded into accomplished, independent and passionate linguists (not just speakers of the language) with a solid understanding of how languages work; turning them into global citizens.

Design of Subject

Knowledge and skills in Modern Foreign Languages lessons are mapped backwards from the demands of work, university study, Key Stage 5, and Key Stage 4, so that the entirety of the curriculum empowers our pupils to seize greatness.

The design of the Modern Foreign Languages curriculum focuses on laying strong foundations for the future and is built upon six principles that are undergirded by the 'Design Principles' of the wider Ark Blake Academy Curriculum:

1. **Powerful knowledge:** Reading and studying texts from authentic resources such as news articles, poems and foreign language literature empowers, transforms and enlightens pupils; learning about modern social issues in the French speaking and Spanish speaking world is equally powerful in providing access to great social mobility. Pupils will also be taught key concepts and terminology.
2. **Language experts:** Explicit teaching of grammatical concepts, phonetics systems and vocabulary for instruction is fundamental: it needs to be transferred to the long-term memory. Skills (reading, listening, writing, speaking and translation) allow for the application of knowledge.
3. **Learning for mastery:** Each pupil has the opportunity to put into practice the knowledge they acquire whether it is in independently, in pair or groups. Pupils will get the opportunities to lead projects that involves the whole school and their communities. Finally, they will get the opportunities to take part in cultural trips in London and abroad to master the knowledge acquired overtime.
4. **Development of domain-centric skills:** In the MFL classroom, pupils will develop the confidence to use the foreign language. Reading, listening, speaking and writing confidently and accurately in the target language will be the focus of each carefully planned sequence of lessons. Pupils will build their knowledge overtime across the four skills while extending their vocabulary knowledge.
5. **An ambitious and coherent curriculum** built around a narrative that is to make the language classroom the 'habitus' of the student- the place they feel the most comfortable, where they have a sense of belonging. A curriculum that places the emphasis on nurturing students into becoming confident orators who are able to manipulate the foreign language and their own based on audience and purpose.
6. **Cultural capital:** Pupils will learn to write and think critically. The resources used will encourage them to have an appreciation of foreign literature and cinematography, have the confidence to be creative and imaginative. They will be encourage to be responsible and think independently through research homework while increasing their knowledge of the French and Spanish culture.

In KS3, the three strands of the MFL Curriculum (Core Grammar, Language knowledge through vocabulary acquisition and Linguistic Competence) support pupils to build upon the firm foundations of their KS2 study. It enables pupils to understand and communicate personal and factual information that goes beyond their immediate needs and interests, developing and justifying points of view in speech and writing, with increased spontaneity, independence and accuracy.

Finally, the MFL Mastery Map will implement the teaching of Tier 2 vocabulary supported through the Spelling Bee Club and monthly house competition. The emphasis on Tier 2 words vocabulary learning reinforces the expectation at KS3 that schools are responsible for helping pupils to express and develop ideas clearly and with increasing accuracy, both orally and in writing; and to speak coherently and confidently, with increasingly accurate pronunciation and intonation.

Extension of Subject

As a subject, there are a multitude of enrichment opportunities that pupils will have access to during their time at Ark Blake Academy. Three cornerstones of the MFL enrichment programme include a Spelling Bee Club, a nationally recognized Language Leaders Club and an International Film Library among educational visits to the French Institute, the Cervantes Institute and abroad.

Further to their successful study of Languages at Ark Blake Academy, pupils will be equipped with the knowledge and skills to support any professional and personal ambition. Whether or not pupils choose to study subjects directly linked to languages at university, such as Translation, French/Spanish Literature or Interpreter, they will have the linguistic skills and the cultural awareness required to succeed in any field on a global scale.

In addition to the extracurricular offer, we also believe it is important to incorporate rich, culturally-themed content and support the creation of resources throughout the academic year for:

- European Day of Languages
- Dia de los Muertos
- International Talent Evening
- International Mother Language day
- Semaine de la Francophonie (French Speaking World Week)
- World Refugee Day
- Fete de la Musique (Make Music Day)
- Bastille Day

The MFL curriculum at Ark Blake Academy truly intends on nurturing some of the nation's future world game changers and communities' leaders, but also recognises its vital importance in preparing pupils for any path to greatness that they may choose to take whether nationally or globally.