

MFL Curriculum Statement

Intent

We are excited about language learning and believe that all RGS students can learn to communicate in two modern languages. We take a communicative approach, so that learners can understand the spoken and written word, then respond fluently in speech and writing. Explicit phonology is imperative for students to decode new language and therefore express their own ideas and justifications. Our vision for learning goes beyond qualifications; we seek to create language learners who understand other cultures and can communicate cross-culturally.

As a team of highly skilled linguists, we are passionate about grammar as a tool for self-expression and we encourage linguistic and etymological knowledge, in order for students to improve awareness of their own language. We aim to use the same content and terminology, yet delivery will vary according to teacher style and personality. In-class learning is supported by self-quizzing at home and online tools, such as Language Gym, www.sentencebuilders.com and Quizlet.

We aim for every unit to be delivered via a booklet of learning (knowledge organiser), containing all the sentence builders, grammar and practice they will need. In an 8-lesson day curriculum, this brings efficiency and organisation for student learning. Teachers predominantly visualise these resources during lessons.

Implementation

In Year 7 all students learn French, using EPI methodology, following a challenging, purpose-built curriculum that will take learners from beginner to intermediate level. Use of parallel texts, sentence builders and choral response all build automaticity in our language learners. (3 lessons a week)

In Year 8 students develop their French and take on an additional modern language: German or Spanish. Again, we follow a bespoke RGS curriculum, that promotes communication using multiple tenses and complex structures. (3 lessons French, 2 lessons German or Spanish a week)

In Year 9 learners have 3 lessons of French, 4 lessons of German or Spanish a week and become quite proficient in both languages. They then choose which one to pursue at GCSE, and indeed many students to take both.

In years 10 and 11 all students take 1 MFL GCSE, the majority at Higher Level. Each year we have dual linguists also. In KS4 students follow the Edexcel GCSE. We have devised our own 'grid method' of helping students learn vocabulary, via competition and games.

A Level class sizes are healthy. We see many top grades in GCSE and A Level.

Impact

In MFL student progress is tracked from Year 7 to Year 13 across all 3 languages, with regular reflection on learner success across all 4 skills: listening, reading, speaking and writing. We offer intervention if gaps in progress appear. Teachers in MFL increasingly observe each others' lessons and discuss best practice together, which in turn enables the team to adjust, improve and build our curriculum. This is also informed by pupil voice around lessons, resources and enjoyment. Pupils now use a tracker card to write their MFL targets and assessment grades in all 4 skills.

EPI

As an MFL team, we have researched extensively the cognitive science of learning, particularly the role of memory and Cognitive Load Theory in second language acquisition. All six teachers have attended training in Conti's Extensive Processing Instruction approach to L2 T&L. As a team we have then discussed, considered and decided to what extent we want to apply this methodology in our school. In KS3 especially, we do seek automaticity and fluency in our learners, therefore we are introducing large amounts of chunking, phonic analysis and priming activities to 'make it stick'.

Modelling

Awareness-raising

Receptive processing

Structured production

Expansion

Autonomy

Routinisation

Spontaneity

Inclusion

These practices have the added benefit of aiding those with additional learning needs e.g., dyslexia, autism whilst also benefiting other learners too.

We aim to scaffold both vocabulary acquisition and grammar development, by using sentence builders and activities that drill the content in all 4 skills. We are also trying to make links between schema, to constantly recycle language and to build retrieval practice, while encouraging classes to share their memory tips and strategies for metacognition. We use self-quizzing to aid this process.

EQ & Environment for Learning

We believe that learning other languages helps our students to build their EQ. They learn, not only how to communicate what they feel, need and want, but also to understand their own culture and ways of seeing the world. Language-learning simultaneously builds resilience and academic independence. They become used to learning through their mistakes, which in turn, builds confidence. We encourage Growth Mindset awareness and the need for successful linguists to work hard in order to succeed. This is promoted through self-quizzing and in-class quizzing.

We believe every child should be able to learn 100% of the time in MFL lessons, so we are raising our expectations, using the 'ALERT' acronym.

Remain ALERT in lessons!

100% concentration on 100% of the tasks from 100% of the pupils

Ask and answer questions by putting my hand up

Listen and nod in silence



Engage in the lesson; sit up, cross arms, pen down

Respect others by encouraging



Track the teacher, text, speaker by looking

Rewards & Sanctions

We give 'bravos' in all 3 languages. In Years 7 – 8 these are added onto a cultural icon; Eiffel Tower, Brandenburger Tor, and Toro. Students receive Positives on Bromcom for these reward cards and for other achievements in work, attitude or behaviour. We try to email home positive comments to celebrate success. In Y9 and KS4, students collect bravos on a date list; after 10 they receive a Positive (and a sweet) and when they fill the sheet, we email home. Parents really appreciate these updates.

For normal classroom sanctions, we follow the school policy with negatives on Bromcom (S1/S2 etc).

If a student is preventing the class from learning 100% of the time, we contact home and put the student on an MFL report card, where the teacher will grade them against agreed criteria. At the end of 2 weeks, we contact home again. In most cases, the news is good news. If not, an after-school detention is given.

If a more short-term approach is required, we arrange with colleagues to instantly remove a student to another classroom. As a consequence, they receive an S2 and a lunchtime HoD MFL detention.

References

G Conti & S Smith, Memory: what every language teacher should know.

D Didau training – The Science of Learning 2019

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