

Modern Foreign Languages Curriculum Statement

Vision

The key aim of the department is to equip all students with the ability to communicate in a modern foreign language through a meaningful and engaging curriculum that also places academic curiosity and cultural appreciation at its core.

Our vision is of a curriculum that sequentially and cumulatively builds students' language skills by consistently building on prior knowledge to embed learning and promote the long-term ability to communicate in a foreign language.

The learning experience of students is at the forefront of our planning, and so we constantly evaluate our teaching and learning resources to ensure the best outcomes for all students.

The MFL department is proud to teach languages as part of the core curriculum (KS3 and KS4) at Thomas Telford School. We are ambitious for our students and have high expectations of them. We foster mutual respect and positive relationships, and champion communication, culture and curiosity to promote tolerance, broad-mindedness and an appreciation of the wider world. We aim to raise the status of language learning and encourage young people and their families to recognise the valuable, transferable skills that learning a foreign language brings. We are dedicated to preparing our students to become responsible, active, and highly employable citizens of a diverse and interdependent world.

Action

At Thomas Telford School, there are currently students studying French at KS3, KS4 and KS5, and Spanish at KS4 and KS5. From September 2024, all students will learn French at KS3.

Through weekly lessons all students gain knowledge of vocabulary, grammar and phonics. Students practise and develop their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills across a broad range of topics and themes to ensure full coverage of the most commonly occurring words in the language studied thus enabling them to communicate confidently and fluently in various situations.

The MFL department strongly supports literacy development through the explicit teaching of reading, writing and oracy skills. The MFL department uses a range of authentic reading materials, including literary excerpts, poems, songs, and video clips, to enrich lessons both culturally and to benefit students' comprehension skills.

We adapt our teaching to meet the needs of all students, including those capable of the highest attainment and those with special educational needs. Appropriate and timely assessments are used to check the cumulative knowledge and skills gained by students and results are used to identify those who require additional support whilst highlighting those who are thriving and thus warrant enhancement opportunities. We ensure that we equip those students capable of continuing their study of a modern foreign language to an advanced level with the foundational knowledge required to do so.

We have carefully constructed a curriculum to ensure recycling of vocabulary, grammar and phonics. Deliberate instruction of carefully sequenced grammar, which increases in difficulty, underpins this curriculum. Formative assessment for learning tasks are embedded into all lessons and teachers adapt the lessons to respond to this feedback. Teachers also provide frequent feedback to students upon whom we then place high expectations to react to the advice they are given. Teachers actively model answers and examination technique to empower students to be independent and successful.

MFL teachers at Thomas Telford School have access to a wide range of online and digital resources to support teaching and learning. All students are provided with individual access to Linguagenut which is used to support reinforcement of vocabulary, grammar and phonics, in addition to building examination skills. Linguagenut is used frequently for independent, home-learning across all Key Stages.

Teachers continuously upskill through the completion of progressional development to ensure that the curriculum is built on a strong foundation of educational research and evidence. Teachers at Thomas Telford School work collaboratively with one another, and with colleagues teaching languages across the TTMAT schools. Students are taught by passionate specialists who possess a wealth of knowledge and experience of living and working in the target language countries.

We provide weekly Session 3 support for all aspects of language learning across the Key Stages: KS4 and KS5 students in particular make use of this time to support preparation for terminal examinations, especially the speaking examination. At KS3, Sessions are used to support catch-up, relating to both attendance and gaps in knowledge, revision techniques and enrichment, and an annual feature on the MFL calendar is the GCHQ National Languages Competition. The MFL department continues to explore and develop enrichment opportunities as staff seek to share their passion for foreign languages and cultures with students, especially those who have limited experience of foreign travel.

Impact

GCSE outcomes in French and Spanish in 2023 were well above the national averages. 98% of the Year 11 cohort in 2022-2023 were entered for the EBacc qualification. The study of a modern foreign language by the majority of Year 11 students contributed to an EBacc Progress 8 score of 0.48 and an EBacc average point score of 5.74. In French, 88.14% of students achieved Grade 4+ and 75.42% scored Grade 5+. In Spanish, 75% of students achieved Grade 4+ and 67.31% of students achieved Grade 5+. Uptake for a modern foreign language at A Level continues to be positive and strong A Level results in MFL support students to continue their studies at a range of Higher Education establishments including The University of London Institute in Paris.

Subject contact

Assistant Head and Director of Languages, Miss Lorna Hutton lhutton@ttsonline.net