Ribby with Wrea
Endowed C.E. Primary School

Modern Foreign Languages Policy
Introduction

Our teaching of a Modern Foreign Language (MFL) is underpinned by our mission statement ‘To educate all children to their full potential with our Christian family’.

The learning of Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) has been an entitlement for all KS2 pupils since 2010. It is currently envisaged that it will become a statutory part of the National Curriculum for KS2 pupils in 2011.

At Ribby with Wrea all children, from Early Years Foundation Stage through Key Stages 1 and 2, have been taught a modern foreign language, usually French, for one hour each week since 2005.

Lessons are currently planned and delivered by a language tutor, who is a Modern Languages graduate (German and French) and has a Level 3 Teaching Assistant qualification. She also acts as Subject Leader for MFL within the school.

The Benefits of Foreign Language Learning

The benefits of learning a modern language in school go far beyond knowledge of that particular language. Children gain a clearer understanding of how languages work, for example in terms of grammar and pronunciation. As part of their language study, children are also encouraged to develop their own strategies for learning, which they can carry over into all other areas of their lives, within school and beyond. Furthermore, our approach to language learning is linked closely with a study of how people who speak that language live: the DFE Framework for Languages stresses that ‘children develop a greater understanding of their own lives in the context of exploring the lives of others’.

Aims

Our aims in teaching a foreign language to primary aged children are therefore:

- to develop the whole child, emotionally, creatively, cognitively and linguistically and especially to develop their social skills and self-confidence;
- to provide an environment in which children feel happy to ‘take a risk’ and experiment with new languages;
- to make language learning fun and awaken an enjoyment of languages which may continue throughout the children’s lives;
- to become aware of different cultures around us and in other parts of the world;
- to understand, value and use a foreign language as a means of communication;
- to help children to develop language-learning skills which they can subsequently transfer to the study of other languages at secondary school and beyond.
Objectives

In 2005, the DfES issued a Framework for Languages, setting out suggested learning objectives for KS2. The Framework does not prescribe specific topics or contexts for learning, but encourages schools to be creative and innovative. This flexibility allows us to plan and deliver lessons which are relevant to the experiences and interests of the children in our school, but which nevertheless work towards the Framework’s objectives.

The learning objectives are organised into the following strands within the Framework:

- **Oracy** - the emphasis is on developing listening and speaking skills and on identifying the sound patterns of the new language through listening to French being spoken. As far as is appropriate for each class and each activity, classroom instructions and praise are delivered in French. Children soon begin to reproduce the sounds with increasing accuracy, through songs and rhymes and by engaging in simple conversations.

- **Literacy** - from an early stage in children’s language learning, simple high-frequency French words are shown in written form. Some children very quickly make the link between the sounds of the language and the written word, and visual learners benefit greatly from having vocabulary reinforced in this way. KS2 children are exposed to a variety of texts, including stories, poems, letters and emails and extracts from children’s magazines.

- **Intercultural understanding** - children gain an understanding of the history and cultural context of a range of countries where French is spoken, as well as an insight into the day-to-day lives, social conventions and celebrations of those who live there. We are fortunate to have a link with the school in Wrea Green’s twin village, St. Bris-le-Vineux, which allows correspondence between classes and between individual children. Children are also encouraged to take part in events arranged by the local Twinning Committee, such as French breakfasts.

In addition, two strands are included which are not specific to French, but support children’s understanding of languages generally:

- **Knowledge about language** – children develop an insight into the nature of language. They become aware of pronunciation and intonation and how these influence meaning. The study of how sentences are built reinforces children’s understanding of word classes.

- **Language learning strategies** – children are encouraged to discuss strategies for learning new words as part of a group and as individuals. By selecting and using different strategies, children develop an understanding of their own learning style.

The Introduction of other Modern Foreign Languages

Opportunities are taken where appropriate to introduce children to additional languages. Past examples have been an introduction to German during ‘Around the World’ week, a look at the Chinese alphabet to coincide with Chinese New Year, and learning to count in Italian whilst examining Italian foods.
Links with other Curriculum Areas

We take full advantage of the flexibility offered by the Language Framework to develop links between MFL and other areas of the curriculum wherever possible. For example, in Reception/Year 1 and in Year 1/2, traditional tales which are the focus of the classes’ literacy lessons have been used in French translation. In Year 5/6, the introduction of transport vocabulary was timed to coincide with a project on traffic movement around Wrea Green. In Year 4/5, language work and a survey of changing travel and holiday habits were linked with class work on the Channel Tunnel.

Planning

Most published programmes, whether commercially available or offered by the QCDA, to support the learning of MFL in Primary Schools are intended for use from Year 3 onwards and have therefore not been suitable for use in our school. We have therefore developed our own Scheme of Work, based on the skills objectives identified by the Framework. The Scheme of Work ensures progression of skills throughout EYFS, KS1 and KS2.

Evidence of Learning

The importance of speaking and listening in MFL has been stressed above. In EYFS and KS1, in particular, there is limited written work as part of language lessons and therefore limited written evidence of learning activities. Children's learning is, from time to time, recorded using digital microphones and video equipment. The language tutor keeps a record of children’s success in relation to their learning objectives.

Assessment

Assessment is carried out informally by the language tutor throughout the year. At the end of the school year, a comment from the language tutor is included on the Annual Report home to parents.

Pupil self-assessment is also encouraged, based on the CILT Language Learning Portfolio. This enables the children to reflect on and record their experiences and achievements in language learning.

Inclusion and Differentiation

Ribby with Wrea is a fully inclusive school and all pupils have access to Modern Foreign Languages. Lessons are planned with a view to differentiating all activities to make them enjoyable and successful for all children in the class. Appropriate levels of support are provided by the language tutor and, where appropriate, by additional support staff. Children are also encouraged to support each other in their learning, in particular through the use of Talking Partners. More able children benefit greatly from being encouraged to explain or clarify their learning, and at the same time are able to reinforce the learning point to the advantage of their less able peers.
With appropriate support, SEN children generally make a full and very positive contribution to language lessons. This is particularly true in KS1 for those children whose preference is for auditory learning and who therefore enjoy lessons which are based almost entirely around listening and speaking. In KS2, tasks are differentiated to maintain maximum focus on listening and speaking for SEN children.

ICT and MFL

As with all subject areas, there is now a vast range of high quality foreign language resources available on CD, DVD and on the internet. Amongst others, Espresso has a wide choice of activities in French. The school also subscribes to the on-line resources of Le Club Français. Such materials can be invaluable, particularly where they allow children to hear the language they are learning being spoken by native speakers. Selective and appropriate use is also made of ICT-based games and stories, many of which can be used interactively on the school’s whiteboards.

Resources

In addition to the above ICT resources, the school has a range of the following:

- dictionaries
- foreign and dual language books
- games
- specialist beanbags, balls, dice etc.

G Metherell
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