

St John Vianney – Modern Foreign Languages Vision Statement



“The limits of my language are the limits of my world.” – Ludwig Wittgenstein

‘Faith in Christ Jesus is what makes each of you equal with each other.’ Galatians 3:28

Learning languages opens up the world: they open doors to other countries, peoples, cultures and traditions. Languages facilitate effective communication with others and in learning languages, we can become better global citizens and stewards of our God-given world. Understanding of a foreign language promotes tolerance and understanding of different cultures, which is crucial in the context of our modern world. Language learning is a lifelong skill, which equips learners with valuable transferrable workplace skills, whether in the UK or through working or studying abroad.

At St John Vianney Catholic Primary School, we believe that the learning of a language is a unifying experience for our children: no matter their ability in other curriculum areas, all children begin their journey of learning French from the same starting point. Furthermore, there is an emphasis on employing a rich range of enjoyable learning experiences to engage all learners. The learning of French at St John Vianney is underpinned by songs, stories and rhymes, used both to reinforce language teaching and to expose children to French culture.

Our MFL curriculum fulfils the National Curriculum Languages Programme of Study. We have chosen to teach French due to staff expertise in the language. Teaching French has allowed us to build strong and ever-developing links with our feeder high schools. Currently, as of Summer 2022, we are part of an exciting Primary French project, supported by St Cuthbert’s Catholic High School. Through our involvement in the project, we are moving to the ‘Primary French Project Scheme of Work’ in September 2022, which is supported by l’Institut Francais Royaume-Uni, the Association for Language Learning and Network for Languages. We are confident that this scheme will allow our children to make progress across each French language skill through small steps, and that the focus remains on being able to *‘do a lot with a little’* rather than a little with a large stock of words in French.

Although the study of a language is only compulsory in KS2, we believe that a love of language learning begins at a young age, and so we ensure that children in KS1 are exposed to French, through weekly lessons, often focused on stories, songs and rhymes. This introduction to French supports children’s transition to KS2. Moreover, our developing links with St Cuthbert’s through the project will strengthen transition from KS2 to KS3, ensuring that the teaching of French can be picked up from the children’s end of key stage level, rather than starting over, which can lead to frustration and disengagement. This focus on transition ensures that there is a consistent approach to the teaching of grammar, phonics and vocabulary across settings. Through this joined-up approach, it is our aim that children who have studied French in KS2 at St John Vianney will go on to choose languages at GCSE and support the government’s goal that 90% of pupils study the suite of subjects that make up the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) by 2025, which includes an ancient or modern language.

Through our French curriculum, children are exposed to carefully selected vocabulary, with a focus on phonics and their written representations, before building phrases and sentences in both spoken and then written tasks. The order in which language is introduced is key to ensure understanding and retention. There are many opportunities for purposeful conversational French to be spoken in lessons – in partner, group, choral and whole class settings. Children are given opportunities to read and listen to meaningful texts in the target language. It is key that children are provided with carefully planned small steps which allow them to progress through each language skill in French.