

Curriculum overview



MFL: French

Our approach

At La Fontaine Academy, we have designed a French curriculum that ensures that children develop key language learning skills, as well as a love of languages and a broad understanding of other cultures. We believe that a high-quality language education should foster children's curiosity, encourage them to express their ideas and thoughts in another language and understand and respond to its speakers - both verbally and in writing. Our curriculum provides opportunities for children to communicate for practical purposes, build solid bases to language learning and discover French literature; all while having fun and developing self-confidence!

We do this by:

- Embarking on our French language learning journey from Reception;
- Ensuring that French is a high-profile part of our curriculum;
- Focussing on twelve main topics, which are taught in depth and built on each year;
- Using high-quality French resources to assist teaching;
- Ensuring all four areas of language learning (speaking & listening, reading and writing) are taught;
- Providing real-life opportunities for children to practise and develop their learning.

Each week, La Fontaine Academy will have a 'phrase de la semaine' (a phrase of the week) that is used by all members of the school community, throughout the school day, in order to raise the profile of the French language and increase its use outside of French lessons. By the end of the year, all of the children should have a bank of phrases that can be used to interact with staff and peers in French. We want the use of other languages, besides English, to be a normal part of our school culture.

To support the children that come to us with a high level of French, we will organise for those children to work in groups with teachers who are fluent in French. They will have a focus on developing the structure of their spoken language, as well as their reading and writing skills, in preparation for a French qualification in upper key stage two.

Our reason for taking this approach

"Les limites de ma langue sont les limites de mon monde."

"The limits of my language are the limits of my world."

- Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951)

Research* shows that learning a second language from a very young age boosts problem-solving, critical-thinking and listening skills in addition to improving memory, concentration and the ability to multi-task. In a comprehensive survey of the state of language learning in

English schools carried out by Tinsley and Board (*British Council, 2016*), they concluded that 'There are many benefits of teaching languages to pupils at Key Stage 2, especially widening pupils' cultural understanding and confidence, improving their literacy and preparing them for a world of work.'

We have chosen this methodical approach to teaching French, as we believe that having a solid base and understanding of the twelve main topics will allow children to build on their knowledge each year. Teaching these topics systematically – little and often – and then developing vocabulary, grammar and sentence structure, will ensure that children leave La Fontaine with the ability to express themselves clearly, not only in spoken language but also with the ability to read, understand and write basic sentences in French.

Giving children the opportunity to establish the building blocks of the French language, and allowing them time to develop vocabulary, comprehension and writing skills, will result in excellent language learning abilities, which will - in turn - result in children who are ready to face the challenges of language learning at secondary school and who are curious about the world around them.

***Research & further reading**

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