

Quality of education in MFL

Our Intent

The MFL department at Nether Stowe School believes that learning a language is a life skill which develops students' confidence, curiosity, and tolerance. The curriculum develops language skills through clear explanation, accurate demonstration, and regular repetition, to ensure that our students grow in their confidence to **understand** and **use** the new language. The curriculum is designed to **inspire** students with a **curiosity** for the wider world. Students develop a thirst for knowledge of other nationalities, countries, and lifestyles. With knowledge comes understanding and increased **tolerance** and **respect**.

The Implementation

Our intent is achieved by the consistent delivery of a thorough, relevant curriculum, designed to build knowledge and skills over time. The understanding of core French phonics is a crucial element in the early stages of learning a language; time in the first term of Year 7 French is devoted to familiarisation with French phonemes and graphemes to give students the tools to recognise key sounds in new vocabulary, and to build confidence in their own ability to pronounce new words and phrases. This understanding of phonics is embedded in all year group Schemes of Learning by regular retrieval of phonics knowledge and application of the rules when using new vocabulary. Retrieval of previously taught vocabulary and grammar features heavily in the French curriculum; this essential element ensures that students are challenged to recall prior learning, out of current context, and increases the likelihood of longer-term retention. Grammar is taught both implicitly and explicitly; at Key Stage 3, familiarisation with key structures is focused on whilst students naturally recognise and enquire about the patterns and shape of the language, gradually laying the foundations for a deep-rooted understanding of linguistic particulars like verb conjugation and word order. As students' understanding of grammar deepens, key grammatical points are explored in greater depth in a more explicit fashion.

The success of our implementation is measured by timely and appropriately challenging formative and summative assessments, followed by structured reflection opportunities which allow students the opportunity to invest time in both identifying their areas of strength and assessment success, and improving their knowledge, understanding and production of French.

The curriculum is carefully designed to ensure that there is balanced development of each of the four language skills over time. Critically, where mastery of a particular skill is identified as being of greater challenge to students, appropriate scaffolding is built into lesson delivery to support students in their understanding, but also develop their own individual resilience to challenge in their learning.

To inspire our students and feed their curiosity for learning French, the Nether Stowe French curriculum identifies opportunities for exposing our students to cultural capital. Students learn about, amongst other aspects, the differences in family structure, education and celebration in the Francophone world, giving them an appreciation for the impact of religion, economy and politics on lives beyond their own. Annual visits abroad are offered with the intention of affording our students the opportunity to experience first-hand the French language, people, culture and climate.

What impact does our implementation have?

Regular review of our well-planned French curriculum ensures that we will continue to develop students that participate confidently, retrieve prior knowledge reliably and are able to explain and apply grammar rules to new French vocabulary. Investment in teaching cultural capital in French means that our students learn to be tolerant and empathetic towards others and foster an intellectual curiosity about the world around them. Students of French learn to be resilient to the challenges of language learning and commit to the flexibility needed to problem-solve in uncomfortable situations; they also learn to access pre-existing skills to deepen their understanding of new content. These soft skills see them better prepared for the wider world through social and vocational training.