



Theale Church of England Primary School

Languages Policy

Rationale for Teaching Languages

The world is becoming a smaller place. The study of languages liberates children from insularity and provides an opening to other cultures. At Theale we have therefore implemented the teaching of French for all children in KS 1 and 2, Japanese to all children in FS2/Yr 1 and Year 6, as well as Latin to a number of able Year 6 children.

Learning a language enriches the curriculum, providing excitement, enjoyment and challenge for children, helping to create enthusiastic learners and to develop positive attitudes to language learning in later life. It also provides opportunities to read age-appropriate authentic literature and learn songs in the target language. The skills, knowledge and understanding gained make a major contribution to the development of children's oracy and literacy and to their understanding of their own culture and those of others. Language also lies at the heart of ideas about individual identity and community, and learning another language can do a great deal to shape children's ideas in this critical area, as well as giving them a new perspective on their own language/s.

Language learning stimulates children's creativity: Children enjoy taking an active part in language lessons. They join in with singing, reciting rhymes and poems, and respond to stories, imitating accurate intonation and pronunciation. They play games, take turns, make things, take the role of the teacher and experiment creatively with language.

Language learning supports oracy and literacy: Children spend much of their time in language lessons speaking, listening and interacting - more than in most other subjects. They take part in role-plays, conversations and question and answer work, sing songs and recite, perform to an audience and respond to a wide range of aural stimuli. This emphasis on communication, including language learning's important role in the 'education of the ear', underpins children's capabilities in oracy, which is critical to effective communication as well as a key foundation for literacy.

Language learning supports and celebrates the international dimension: Although it enjoys much more linguistic diversity than in the past, England remains a place where the motivation to learn another language is affected by the position of English as a widely spoken, world language. This makes it even more important that we give all children the chance to learn another language in order to gain insights into not only their own language/s and culture, but of those of others around the world.

Therefore, our intent for Languages is to:

- ensure that each child from FS2 to Year 6 has the opportunity to study French, fostering their interest in the culture of France and the francophone world;
- ensure that children in FS2/Yr 1 and Year 6 have an introduction to Japanese, embedding a love for languages from further afield and of different cultures;
- ensure that the most able Year 6 linguists have the opportunity to learn Latin in a before-school club;
- provide a firm foundation for further language-learning, equipping children with the skills that they need in order to become life-long language learners, both for the pleasure that can be derived from doing so, and in order to equip them to study and work in other countries;
- enable pupils to understand the purpose of learning a language through authentic materials;
- help children to become aware that language has a structure, and that this structure differs from one language to another;
- develop pupils' communication skills, presented in both spoken and written words;
- teach vocabulary and linguistic structures informed by the national curriculum and the skills expressed therein: listening, speaking, reading and writing (as well as cultural understanding);
- enable children to draw comparisons between French and English vocabulary, using their knowledge of cognates and near-cognates to decode unfamiliar texts of increasing complexity;
- teach children the basics of phonics in French to allow them to read, speak and spell with increased confidence and accuracy;
- encourage children to draw comparisons between French and English grammar, syntax and sentence structure, as a tool for developing their understanding of the French language as well as their understanding of English;
- give children opportunities to manipulate language for their own purpose and to write with increasing complexity and independence;
- enable pupils to explore their own cultural identities and those of others;
- help pupils to gain enjoyment, pride and a sense of achievement;
- give children opportunities to make, and learn from, mistakes in the target language, thereby building resilience.

Implementation:

French is taught by an experienced specialist teacher with a degree in French. Lessons vary in length between 30 minutes per week in KS1, 50 minutes per fortnight for Years 2 and 3 and 35-60 minutes each week for UKS2. The current programme of study has been developed by the specialist French teacher, structured around the Primary Languages Network scheme, ensuring coverage of the national curriculum and the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Each class in a year group follows the same objectives, covering the same content each half term. FS2 and Year 1 are taught together, as are Year 4 and 5, on a two-year rolling plan. Lessons are pitched high - we 'teach to the top' and also provide extension opportunities for the more able and the older pupils in each group.

The systematic teaching of the five 'pillars of progression' (to quote the Association of Language Learning) – vocabulary, phonics, grammar, cultural understanding, and songs, stories and rhymes - includes built-in opportunities for children to revisit knowledge at varying degrees of complexity at a variety of points over the seven years of primary study.

Lessons are intended to be active and highly focused, with children working both as a whole class, independently and in small groups / pairs to complete tasks at their individual level. Work is differentiated in a variety of ways to accommodate children in the same class who are all at different stages of their language-learning journeys. Activities consist of vocabulary input and practice, explicit phonics work, grammar and sentence-building activities, games, stories, songs, rhymes, role-play, writing words, phrases, sentences and short paragraphs, dictionary skills, learning about life in France and other francophone countries and the study of authentic texts.

The Japanese programme of study has been developed by an experienced teacher and Japanese speaker who also delivers the lessons, making use of resources from the Japan Foundation. FS2/Year 1 have 20 minutes of Japanese per week, and Year 6 have 30 minutes per week. In Japanese lessons, children are taught the phonology of the language, gain exposure to its writing system and the three alphabets, and learn about unique cultural aspects. Year 6 are also introduced to Japanese grammar. The values of respect and tolerance are embedded in the Japanese programme of study.

Latin is taught before school once a week for 25 minutes by a Classics graduate and Latin scholar, to a small number of able Year 6 linguists. Pupils follow the Minimus textbook and a strong focus is placed on finding links between Latin and English and studying various historical aspects of Roman culture and society. Lessons include a range of activities, including looking at the Latin roots of different English and French words, studying picture stories and Roman reports, reading aloud and decoding historical texts, translation, and grammar, including learning different verbs in various conjugations in both the active and passive voices.

Although aspects of other languages may also be taught to some children from time to time and Japanese and Latin are taught to certain year groups and groups of pupils, French is the main, assessed language.

Impact:

All children at Theale learn Languages from day one, meaning it is never a new, 'scary' subject. Children are used to the notion of learning a different language and are not inhibited from having a go. Pupils at Theale are enthusiastic, confident language learners who understand the relevance of speaking and understanding other languages in today's world. Our children become competent linguists over time and are well prepared for the next stage of their education at secondary school.

Assessment:

Formative and summative assessment are both used to ensure progress over time in KS2. Class books are marked regularly so that gaps in knowledge are identified and in order to inform the planning of future lessons and units. A 'Puzzle it out' summative assessment is completed once a year in French and is marked by the specialist teacher. The assessment criteria is linked to the benchmark objectives for Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 as set out by the Primary Languages Network to equate to level A1 of the Common European Framework of Reference. Language data is also gathered and recorded twice a year on a whole-school level, helping to demonstrate both attainment and progress over time.

Languages curriculum planning

We will carry out the curriculum planning in Languages in three phases (long-term, medium-term and short-term). The Theale Languages programme of study is based on the KS1 / KS2 Primary Languages Network scheme, linking to the national curriculum Languages Programme of Study for KS2.

Weekly curriculum plans are handed to the headteacher inclusive of lesson objectives for Languages, drawing upon the teacher's own plans and the PLN scheme planning.

Equal Opportunities and Special Needs

Every pupil will be given equal opportunity to follow the national curriculum or Foundation Stage curriculum irrespective of their ethnic or linguistic background, gender, disability or religious beliefs. Children with Special Educational Needs will have full access to the Languages curriculum which will be modified to best meet their needs. Those identified as Able, Gifted and Talented in Languages will be given opportunities to develop their skills.

Monitoring

The monitoring of Languages will take the form of classroom observations, monitoring of planning, work scrutiny, interviews with children, learning walks and monitoring of displays. The subject leader, working with the headteacher is responsible for the monitoring of Languages. The headteacher will report to governors through a termly report.