

The Subject Curriculum at Five Acres High School

In MFL, we learn about languages and the wider world so we can be better communicators and global citizens.

Intent

Why should all pupils learn this subject?

Learning a language gives students countless opportunities for the future. Learning a language gives students a wider view of the world and those who live in it, which is particularly important in the area our students live. Further, languages give students skills they will use regardless of the career path they choose. This includes communication skills, problem solving skills, resilience, literacy skills, listening skills, cultural awareness, and more. Learning a foreign language also helps students to better understand English.

What is the core knowledge in this subject?

Our curriculum is underpinned by four Big Ideas:

- Phonics - Sound patterns are the building blocks of language and vary from language to language. Understanding and using phonics correctly is imperative in oral and aural communication.
- Tenses - Communicating about the past, present and future relies on the knowledge of multiple verb structures in different timeframes
- Cultural Awareness - The way in which we communicate depends on who we are and to whom we are talking. Understanding and respecting cultural differences and traditions is essential to be global citizens
- Gender and Adjectival Agreement - Changes the way we see nouns in different languages and impacts all words in written and spoken communication.

Implementation

How is this subject taught at FAHS?

In order to align the MFL curriculum with current foreign language acquisition pedagogical research, topic coverage has been decreased to three per year for each year group in order to avoid cognitive overload and to allow for more practice, interleaving, chunking and input flooding of key structures to create automaticity in students' language abilities. Some of the topics covered include describing family and friends, your school, holidays, talking about free time, and discussing the world of work and social and global issues. New language is introduced to students in chunks and key phrases, using sentence builders, as opposed to single words.

Throughout the KS3 and KS4 curriculum key structures, essential for communication, are repeated and used across different topics and in different contexts to enable students to recycle and use structures automatically.

What are the key ways students practise in this subject?

Language is introduced using sentence builders through teacher-led listening and translation activities to allow for 'pushed output'; where teachers have total control over student output to ensure that students have ample opportunity to practise and recycle target chunks and structures. Similar to the listening activities, which utilise mini-whiteboards to assess student comprehension and retrieval, reading activities are tailored for students to ensure 90-95% comprehensible input, as "patterns are more likely to be noticed and acquired when they occur in texts which are highly accessible by the target students.

Impact

What does assessment look like in this subject?

Key Stage 3 (Y7-Y9)

Students will complete one Reading and Writing assessment at the end of each module. In addition, students will complete one 'Speaking Spot Check' in which they must respond to a set of questions. They will also complete three listening 'Spot Checks' during each module.

Key Stage 4 (Y10-Y11)

Students in Year 10 will complete 4 assessments at the end of each module in each of the 4 skills: Reading, Listening, Writing and Speaking. These are based on GCSE style questions from the exam board.

Year 11 students will complete two full sets of mocks, covering all four papers (Speaking, Reading, Listening and Writing).