



MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE POLICY

RATIONALE

The learning of a foreign language provides a valuable educational, social and cultural experience for the pupils.

“In the knowledge society of the 21st century, language competence and intercultural understanding are not optional extras; they are an essential part of being a citizen. Language skills are also vital in improving understanding between people here and in the wider world, and in supporting global citizenship by breaking down barriers of ignorance and suspicion between nations. Learning other languages gives us insight into the people, culture and traditions of other countries, and helps us to understand our own language and culture.”

(LANGUAGES FOR ALL – LANGUAGES FOR LIFE (DFE)).

St David's N.S. were successful in being granted the opportunity to participate in the language taster option offered by Languages Connect (PPLI Primary) to learn Spanish. We aim to continue with Spanish lessons using our own resources, especially by hosting a Spanish Erasmus student teacher from Spain.

AIM

This school aims to

- to develop pupils' communication and literacy skills that lay the foundation for future language learning;
- to develop linguistic competence, extend their knowledge of how language works and explore differences and similarities between the target language and English;
- to enhance pupils' awareness of the multilingual and multicultural world and introduce an international dimension to pupils' learning, giving them an insight into their own culture and those of others;
- to provide a medium for cross-curricular links and for reinforcement of knowledge, skills and understanding developed in other subjects;
- foster positive attitudes towards foreign language learning;
- form a sound basis for further study at secondary level and beyond.

OBJECTIVES

The aims and objectives of learning a Modern Foreign Language in primary school are to:

- foster an interest in learning other languages;
- introduce young children to another language in a way that is enjoyable and fun;
- stimulate and encourage children's curiosity about language;
- encourage children to be aware that language has structure and that the structure differs from one language to another;
- help the children develop their awareness of cultural differences in other countries;
- develop their speaking and listening skills;
- lay the foundations for future study;
- extend language teaching beyond mother tongue learning.

METHOD OF DELIVERY

There is no National Curriculum for MFL at primary school but there are guidelines from the Language Connect sampler (PPLI) and from the previous pilot programme (MLPSI) that are used to support the planning the MFL curriculum. Spanish is the MFL that will be delivered at St David's N.S.

At St David's N.S. we believe in a communicative approach in which all pupils can actively engage in meaningful tasks. Spanish will be exploited to the maximum. Greatest emphasis will be given to speaking and listening, with writing and some reading where relevant.

The children are taught how to:

- ask and answer questions
- use correct pronunciation and grammar
- memorise words
- interpret meaning
- understand basic grammar
- use dictionaries
- work in pairs and groups and communicate in Spanish
- look at life in another culture

Learning will:

- have clear, achievable objectives
- be carefully planned and structured
- be practical, active and varied
- involve the use of ICT where appropriate
- include whole class, small group and pair work
- promote success and self esteem

TEACHING AND LEARNING STYLES

The children will have followed the NPL Primary Curriculum Literacy and will have knowledge of English, including grammatical awareness and knowledge of some grammatical terms. The MFL scheme of work takes account of this and consolidates and builds on this work where appropriate. Children are encouraged to increase their knowledge of how the Spanish language works and to explore differences and similarities between this new language and English or another language.

Pupils learn in many ways and to accommodate this, a variety of learning styles are used including song, game, pictures, video and audio material, ICT etc. Pupils are encouraged to share their experiences of other languages and cultures, and find things out for themselves. Pupils work individually, in pairs, small groups and in whole class situations according to the activity. Work is mainly oral, but an increasingly number of reading and writing tasks are included as pupils enter the senior level. On occasion, pupils are recorded on audio and video.

A multi-sensory and kinaesthetic approach to teaching is used, i.e. a physical element is introduced into some of the games, rhymes and songs as this serves to reinforce memory. Teachers try to make lessons as enjoyable as possible so that the children develop a positive attitude to the learning of Modern Foreign Languages. Children's confidence is built through praise for any contribution they make, however tentative.

PLANNING

The agreed programme of work for Spanish will ensure continuity, progression and differentiation. The programme will be planned by the language teacher in cooperation with the class teacher integrating with the teaching of Irish. The whole

school approach to long and short term planning for MFL reflects the normal procedure in St David's N.S.

ASSESSMENT

This is ongoing and continuous and informs future planning. It will follow the guidelines established in the school's assessment policy.

Teachers assess children's progress informally during the lessons, evaluating progress against the four Attainment Targets of:

- Listening and Responding;
- Speaking;
- Reading and Responding;
- Writing.

Informal comments on their progress in Spanish will be made in reports to parents.

RESOURCES

All resources for MFL are kept in school, on class teacher's laptop and on the school's website to enable easy access for those who need them

DIFFERENTIATION

At St David's NS we are aware that pupils bring to school different experiences, interests and strengths that will influence the way in which they learn, and we take this into consideration when planning approaches to teaching and learning which will allow all pupils to participate fully and effectively.

At our school we teach Spanish to all children, whatever their ability. We recognise that all classes have children of widely differing abilities. Suitable opportunities are provided for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability and experience of the pupil. We plan for individual needs, differentiating to allow all to achieve, building self-esteem and fulfilling our aim to give all pupils the opportunity to experience success in learning and to achieve as high a standard as possible.

This is achieved by, for example,

- setting common tasks which are open ended and can have a variety of responses;
- setting tasks of increasing difficulty (not all pupils complete all tasks);
- grouping pupils according to ability in the room and setting different tasks for each group;
- providing resources of different complexities. matched to the ability of the child;
- using additional resources to support the work of individual children / groups of children;
- using peer support by partnering pupils of disparate ability to complete tasks.

TEACHING MFL TO CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

All pupils at St David's N.S. are taught MFL whatever their ability. It forms part of the school's policy to offer a broad and balanced education for all children. Appropriate learning opportunities are offered and support given, taking into account the targets identified on IEPs.

LINKS WITH OTHER AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM

Learning another language presents opportunities for the reinforcement of knowledge, skills and understanding developed in other curriculum areas. These opportunities can be exploited through aspects of:

- English: development of speaking and listening skills, knowledge and understanding of grammar and sentence construction. Opportunities to compare the foreign language with English or another language (i.e. Irish and / or another spoken by children in the school) can be exploited through use of the new alphabet, phonemes, rhyming patterns, sound/spelling links, dictionary work, formation of structures (such as singular/plural, gender, negatives, question forms, position of adjectives, imperatives), intonation, dialogues, poetry, different text types, formation of complex sentences;
- ICT: use of e-mail with schools abroad, materials from the internet and satellite television, video and audio, presentation of data, word-processing;
- Citizenship: the multilingual society, knowledge of other countries and cultures;
- Mathematics: counting, calculations, the time and the date, money;

- Geography: work relating to the study of other countries, points of the compass, weather;
- Science: work on parts of the body, animals;
- Music: rhyming, rhythm, singing, composition, world music;
- RE: international or multicultural work, celebration of festivals, storytelling, calendars, customs;
- History: work relating to the study of other countries, family trees of famous people;
- Art: descriptions of paintings;
- PE: physical responses to the teacher's instructions issued in the language being learnt.

ASSESSMENT AND RECORDING

Pupils' work is assessed informally on the basis of observation during the lesson. This is particularly important for oral work. At the end of a piece of work, pupils may check each other's answers, particularly for a listening or reading activity, but the teacher will always mark and comment on the work. Very simple comments are made in the target language such as Bien, and longer comments in English. Verbal feedback is also given with examples of good practice shared to encourage and motivate.

There are four attainment targets in MFL:

Attainment target 1: Listening and responding

Attainment target 2: Speaking

Attainment target 3: Reading and responding

Attainment target 4: Writing

Language Teacher with class teachers make long-term assessments towards the end of the school year, and they use these to assess progress against school MFL targets. With the help of these long-term assessments, teachers are able to set targets for the next school year and summarize the progress of each child before discussing it with the child's parents.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

Monitoring of the standards of the children's work and of the quality of teaching in MFL is the responsibility of the PPLI Primary leader and Principal. The work of the PPLI primary leader also involves supporting colleagues in the teaching of MFL, being informed about current developments in the subject, and providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school. <https://languagesconnect.ie/primary/>
The Principal and PPLI primary leader will review samples of the children's work and undertake lesson observations of MFL teaching across the school.

REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed annually by staff for ratification by the Board of Management. The review will mainly consist of whether the school has the resources to continue the programme for another year through the Department of Education's initiative PPLI Primary and/or through the school's own initiative of hosting an Erasmus student teacher or PTA fundraising.

RATIFICATION

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on date below.

The policy will be available in the school for parents to view.

This policy has been made available to school personnel and published on the school website.

Ratified by Board of Management on: 26th January 2022

Signed: _____

Chairperson

Principal