

Statement of Intent

Studying Spanish or French at RPHS will support the development of students' ability to operate in a global setting. Knowledge of another language and culture aids the development of tolerance and understanding of world issues and enables students to function in a second language environment, thus raising their employability and expanding their personal horizons. Learning a second language has been proven to expand cognitive capacity and mental agility. Understanding the mechanics of a second language deepens student's understanding of their first language and enriches their English vocabulary. The language learning techniques delivered in lessons will support students in learning other languages in the future where needed. Progressing to speaking in another language is a fantastic way to challenge students to step out of their comfort zone, which supports positive personal development.

Key Stage 3 Curriculum

Students study either Spanish or French. They have 2 60 minute lessons per week and will be set one piece of online quiz homework to support their learning in class. The schemes of learning are designed to support students to gradually progress from the understanding and production of simple phrases to a variety of sentences across three time frames and in several familiar contexts by the end of KS3. Time is allowed for continuous retrieval and interleaving of previously learned phonics, grammar and vocabulary, to encourage mastery of basic language skills. Students are encouraged to speak as much as possible in the target language in class whether that be through chanting, participating in games, reading aloud, speaking to a partner, the teacher or the class. Students are exposed to a variety of staged and authentic written, audio and audio visual material in addition to constant comprehensible input from the teacher to aid comprehension. Each scheme of learning incorporates a cultural element, focusing on the lives of young people across the French/Spanish speaking worlds. Learning is assessed at the end of each topic based unit, testing a selection of the key language skills: listening, speaking, reading, writing and grammar.

Key Stage 4 Curriculum

We follow the Edexcel GCSE specification and the assessment is broken down into 4 papers each worth 25% of the final grade; listening, speaking, reading and writing. Speaking is assessed through a one to one oral examination with the class teacher. Students have 3 60 minute lessons per week and will be set one piece of homework to support their learning in class. The GCSE themes are: self and identity, holidays and local area, school, jobs and future plans and global issues. In each of these themes students will revise and expand on key knowledge brought up from KS3 and will then be gradually introduced to new grammatical and vocabulary areas suited to extending the contexts in which they can operate, from the everyday and familiar to more formal and transactional situations that they might encounter while travelling or at work. Throughout the course the students will spend time working in pairs practicing their speaking skills in order to build their confidence both for the oral examination and to be able to use their French/Spanish oral skills in the future. Each scheme of learning includes a cultural element, often exposing students to the types of festivals and celebrations enjoyed across the French and Spanish speaking world. Students will be given feedback from regular class assessments of key skills, grammar and vocabulary. In addition, they will have the opportunity to experience a full exam series (Foundation tier) at the end of year 10, and another (Foundation or Higher) at the mid stage of year 11. These allow students to have a clear idea of their progression and what they need to do to improve..

Key Stage 5 Curriculum

We follow the Edexcel A-level specification and the assessment is broken down into 3 papers: listening reading and translation, speaking, and written response to film and literary texts. The oral examination is based around a presentation of a research project on a cultural topic of the student's choice. The themes of the course are: Changes in Spanish society (family, work and tourism), music, festivals and gastronomy of Spain and Latin America, Immigration and integration and the Spanish Civil War, the Franco dictatorship and the transition to democracy. We also study a Spanish film and a play as part of the course, we analysis the characters, the themes and the literary or cinematographic techniques used and relate these to our knowledge of Spanish society. All of the content is practiced intensively through speaking, audio, audio visual and written stimuli, games, debates and written tasks. Regular feedback is given through exam style assessment tasks. Students have 5 60 minute lessons per week and will be set two pieces of homework to support their learning in class.

Extended Learning

What we offer to extend the learning of our students

We offer extracurricular MFL club to students wishing to extend their cultural knowledge through watching and making short films. We also offer an extracurricular Italian club for students wishing to learn a complimentary language. We offer KS5 students the opportunity to put leadership skills into practice by volunteering to support lower school students with their conversational skills. We have organised several residential trips abroad in the years preceding the pandemic and hope to do so again as the situation allows. We facilitate the full range of home language examinations at GCSE and A-level and support groups of students through these each year.

What can parents do to support extended learning in this subject?

Parents can support their children by helping them engage with examples of other languages we see around and about, for example on restaurant menus or in song lyrics and they can watch subtitled foreign language films or series with their children. There are a wide variety of these available for both French and Spanish on popular streaming services and occasionally through BBC Iplayer. Parents can encourage their children to try out their language skills if abroad or when talking to friends or neighbours from other countries.

The effectiveness of language learning apps has become apparent. We recommend students download free versions of 'Duolingo' or 'Memrise' onto a tablet or smartphone and make a few minutes of practice a part of their daily routine to improve their fluency quickly. Conjuguemos.com is a particularly effective tool for internalising verb endings and other grammar rules. Again, students can set up a free account.

Many students find music they enjoy helps them learn. The website letras.com is a great place to start finding Spanish songs you like with their lyrics.

All students bring home a copy of the appropriate sentence builders from the unit they are studying. Parents can help by quizzing students on the words and sentences from these by saying an English sentence from the sentence builder which the student should translate into Spanish or French. The parent can then check their accuracy using the sentence builder.