

# Curriculum Overview - MFL

## Principles and Purpose of the MFL Curriculum

*“Learning a foreign language is a liberation from insularity and provides an opening to other cultures. A high-quality languages education should foster pupils’ curiosity and deepen their understanding of the world. The teaching should enable pupils to express their ideas and thoughts in another language and to understand and respond to its speakers, both in speech and in writing. It should also provide opportunities for them to communicate for practical purposes, learn new ways of thinking and read great literature in the original language. Language teaching should provide the foundation for learning further languages, equipping pupils to study and work in other countries.” (DfE, MFL, September 2013).*

**The following principles have informed the planning of the United Learning curriculum across all subjects:**

- **Entitlement:** All pupils have the right to learn what is in the United Learning curriculum, and schools have a duty to ensure that all pupils are taught the whole of it.
- **Coherence:** Taking the National Curriculum as its starting point, our curriculum is carefully sequenced so that powerful knowledge builds term by term and year by year. We make meaningful connections within subjects and between subjects.
- **Mastery:** We ensure that foundational knowledge, skills, and concepts are secure before moving on. Pupils revisit prior learning and apply their understanding in new contexts.
- **Adaptability:** The core content – the ‘what’ – of the curriculum is stable, but schools will bring it to life in their own local context, and teachers will adapt lessons – the ‘how’ – to meet the needs of their own classes.
- **Representation:** All pupils see themselves in our curriculum, and our curriculum takes all pupils beyond their immediate experience.
- **Education with character:** Our curriculum - which includes the taught subject timetable as well as spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development, our co-curricular provision, and the ethos and ‘hidden curriculum’ of the school – is intended to spark curiosity and to nourish both the head and the heart.

**Here we explore these principles in the context of the MFL curriculum:**

- **Entitlement:** All pupils in England have the right to learn the basics of another European Language and to explore the culture(s) where that language is spoken.
- **Coherence:** Our MFL curriculum for French and Spanish is carefully sequenced so that knowledge of vocabulary and grammar builds term by term and year by year. Linguistic competency deepens and expands at every step.
- **Mastery:** We ensure that linguistic knowledge and its application in context are secure before moving on. Pupils revisit prior learning and apply it in an increasingly sophisticated manner.
- **Adaptability:** The core linguistic competencies and essential vocabulary are the same in all contexts, but departments and teachers adapt lessons and tailor specific content to meet the needs of their pupils.
- **Representation:** Our curriculum presents French and Spanish as global languages, spoken by a diversity of people.
- **Education with character:** MFL provide pupils with an opportunity to learn about other peoples, cultures and beliefs and compare them with their own.

## Roadmap of the MFL Curriculum


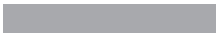
The roadmap diagrams on the following pages set out the route that we expect pupils to take through our curriculum. The roadmap shows that the journey starts with the basics of the language including phonics, greetings and the language required to communicate in the classroom. There are four units every year with time embedded to revisit, consolidate, and extend the language learnt. In Years 8 and 9 there are also opportunities for interleaving prior language. All units are compulsory and build on previous knowledge; the focus is always progression in the three pillars of language learning: phonics, vocabulary, and grammar.

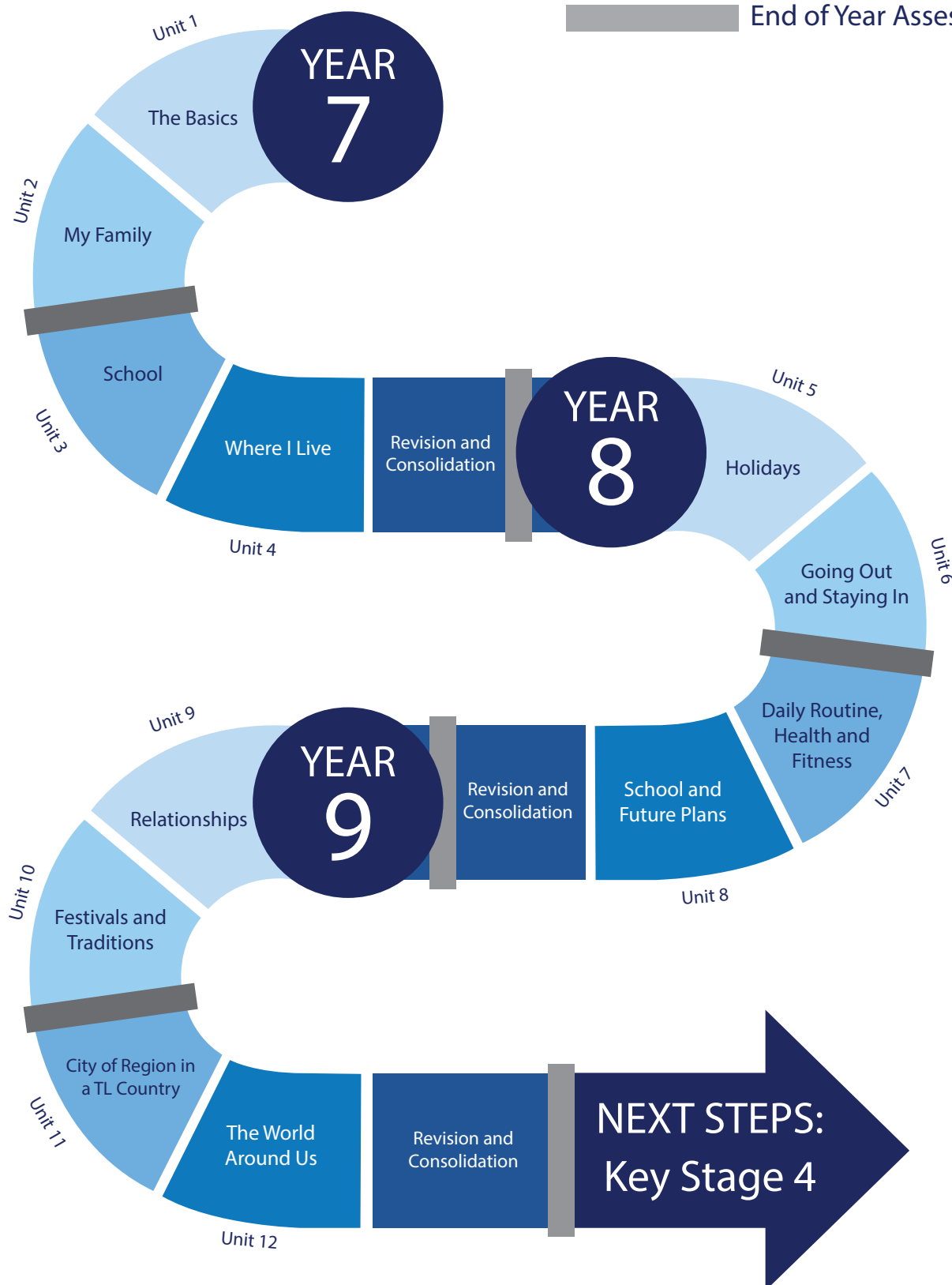


# MFL

## Key Stage 3

KEY:


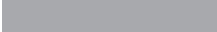
-  Mid Year Assessment
-  End of Year Assessment

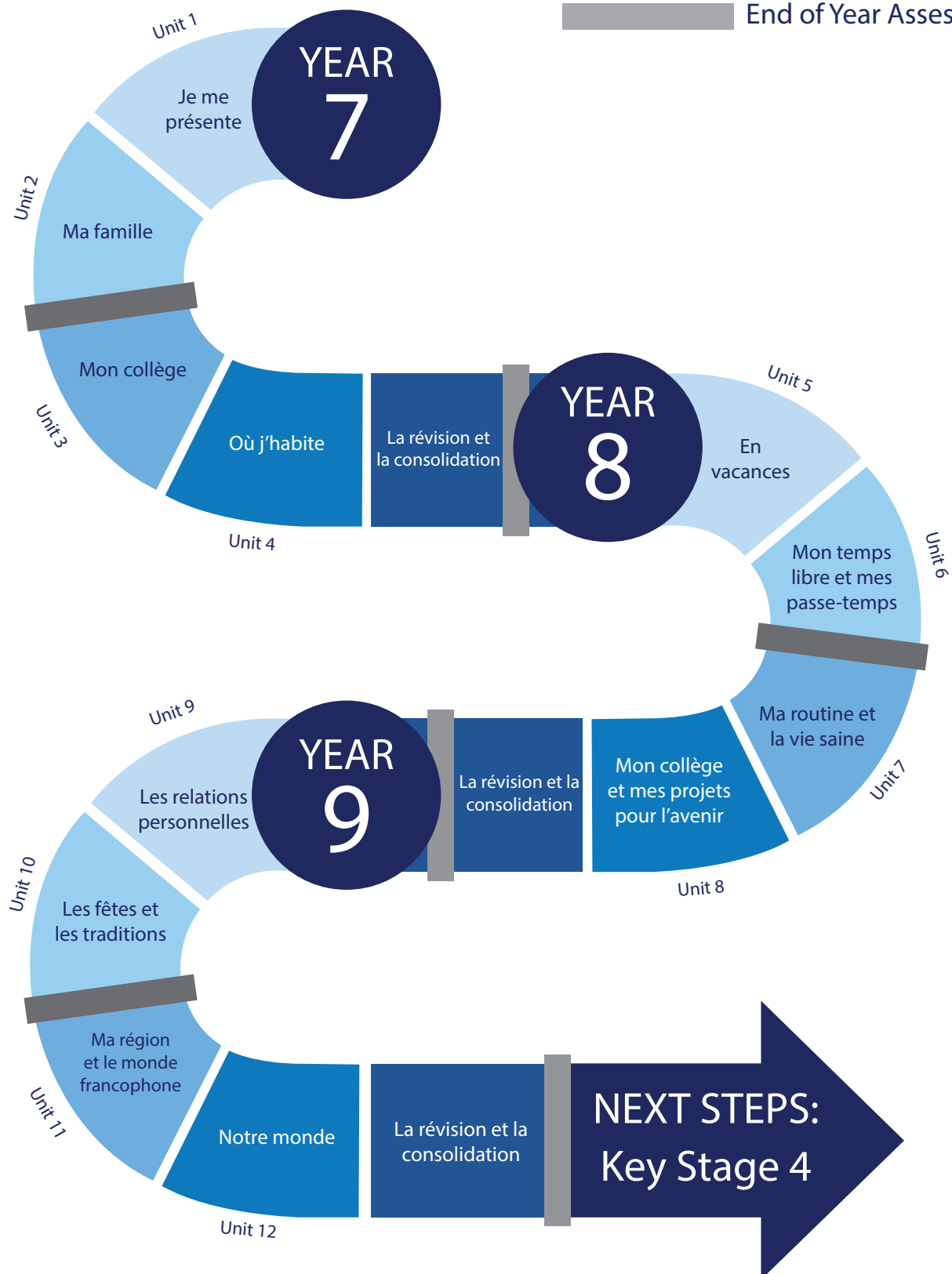


# LE FRANÇAIS

## Key Stage 3

KEY:

 Mid Year Assesment  
 End of Year Assesment





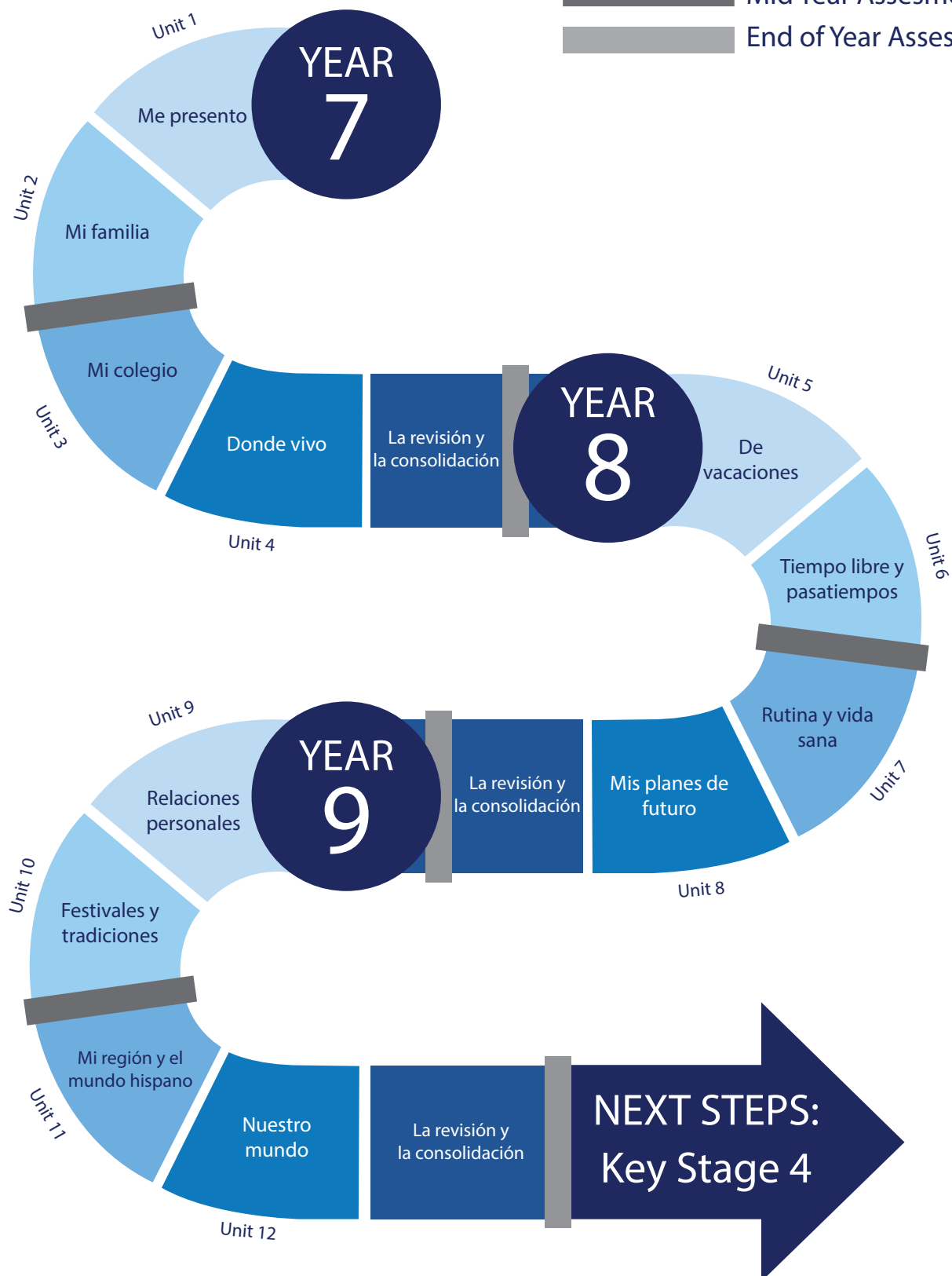
**United Learning**  
The best in everyone™

# EL ESPAÑOL

## Key Stage 3

KEY:

- Mid Year Assessment
- End of Year Assessment



## ‘Why This, Why Now?’

In our planning we have asked ourselves ‘why this, why now?’ Here we provide some examples of the curriculum choices we have made, and why the units have been placed in the order we have chosen:

- **Example 1:** In Year 7 after the basics of the languages (focusing heavily on sound-symbol correspondence and the context of the language in the world) we cover a unit on *Family* which allows pupils to learn descriptions and adjectival agreements as well as introducing opinions with simple justifications. This is also likely to provide a good consolidation and stretching opportunity to those who have learnt this language at Key Stage 2.
- **Example 2:** Year 8 begins with a unit on *Holidays* which provides a very logical platform for introducing the hardest and most important grammar point to cover this year: the past time frame. This way pupils have the whole year to revisit and consolidate its use in different contexts.
- **Example 3:** The last unit in Year 8, *School and Future Plans* allows revisiting of key language from Year 7: personality description, school subjects and expressing simple future wishes; phonics, vocabulary and grammar are revisited. In this unit Year 7 structures are extended by adding more ways to express future wishes and by focusing on third person descriptions rather than first person. New language such as professions is introduced.
- **Example 4:** Units in Year 9 have been chosen to maximise engagement from pupils who will not continue with the language into GCSE as well as those who will. The unit covers areas of knowledge familiar and interesting to young adolescents, such as environmental issues, festivals, and celebrations, giving cultural information about areas where the language is spoken.
- **Example 5:** Year 9 content builds on and extends the language covered in Years 7 and 8, focusing on adding layers of complexity rather than introduce new linguistic competencies. In terms of vocabulary, our units help bridge the gap to Key Stage 4 by introducing some key GCSE topics such as environment or family relations.

## Teaching the MFL Curriculum

Effective teaching in MFL is conducted mainly in carefully planned target language (tailored to pupils’ language ability level and building systematically on prior knowledge) under the framework provided by the Rosenshine Principles. Lessons begin with a short recall activity and the modelling is kept short and is memorable. New language is introduced in small steps, followed by sufficient guided practice. Teachers check for understanding and employ various questioning techniques, ensuring all pupils are engaged and only moving on to independent practice when appropriate. To ensure a high success rate in independent practice, teachers ensure the language required, both vocabulary and grammar, has been practised sufficiently and provide the necessary scaffolds. MFL lessons have a clear I-we-you structure that is not rigid, as there might be various modelling stages (I) within one lesson. A balance of skills (reading, listening, writing, speaking, translating) is desirable in most lessons, although occasionally one or two of the skills might be prioritised.

### So, when we walk into an MFL lesson, what should we expect to see?

- Lessons start with a recall activity based around key language pupils need to be fluent in, such as time markers or frequency adverbs. This is often a self-assessed low stake quiz and the whole exercise does not last more than 10 minutes.
- Modelling of new language is done in small steps and in a memorable way, often including choral repetition to acquire and practise the right pronunciation and consolidate the sound-symbol correspondences. Colour-coding is often used when introducing grammatical patterns. Explanations are kept short.

- Guided practice always follows the short modelling. This can take different forms, but the use of independent white boards allows MFL teachers to check everyone's understanding at once and their use is encouraged.
- In most lessons there are examples of practice of different but interdependent skills: listening, reading, writing, speaking and there are also regular examples of translation, dictation and reading aloud. Teachers circulate with purpose, checking for understanding and engaging with pupils, often offering verbal feedback as they circulate.
- Extended writing practice is done in chunks, with the teacher checking for understanding at each step. Teachers do not leave pupils writing independently for long periods of time without checking unless it is an assessment.
- In Year 11 MFL lessons we particularly expect to see:
  - "True" independent practice of all skills, where pupils are given opportunities to demonstrate knowledge of more complex and longer language without external support or scaffolds, such as dictionaries, booklets, sentence builders or teacher input.
  - A clear balance and interrelation between the skills (listening, reading, writing, speaking, and translating) over a week or fortnight of lessons.
  - Pupils used to self-correcting and improving their own writing as part of an extended writing task.
  - Pupils used to practising the language orally, in pairs or with the teacher, with a clear emphasis on accurate pronunciation.
- In Sixth Form MFL lessons we particularly expect to see:
  - Nearly all exchanges to be conducted in the target language (with perhaps the exception of grammar explanations)
  - Independent learning systems in place that encourage and expect pupils' autonomy. For example, a system to build vocabulary beyond what is covered in lessons, or a structured approach to building a bank of facts for each sub-theme in preparation for the oral exam.

Our curriculum is designed to provide challenge for all learners. Teachers are expected to adapt resources for the needs of their students.

## Assessing the MFL Curriculum

### Formative Assessment in MFL

MFL teachers continually assess pupils and check for everyone's understanding as part of their lessons. All lessons begin with a recall activity, often in the form of a translation quiz, focusing on key language. Listening and reading exercises also provide instant assessment allowing pupils and teachers to identify areas that require further work. For extended writing tasks, whole-class feedback is an efficient way of picking out key themes in pupils' responses. Pair speaking activities often provide teachers with assessment opportunities, concentrating on a certain number of pupils at a time.

Each unit of our Key Stage 3 curriculum has an optional end of unit assessment, covering two skills (one productive and one receptive). In addition, there are recommendations for achievement tests throughout our curriculum overview, designed to test knowledge of phonics, vocabulary, and grammar. Great care is taken to ensure that assessments are valid. Testing pupils' ability to produce long stretches of more complex language in less scaffolded environments is progressively introduced.

### Summative Assessment in MFL

All pupils are expected to sit end of year assessments in Years 7, 8 and 9. These consist of listening, reading, and writing with elements of translation. Speaking remains optional.



In Year 10 pupils are expected to sit a past paper at Foundation-tier, unless the Head of Department decides to opt for Higher-tier for some pupils. All skills are assessed.

### **Recovery and Catch-up in MFL**

For any pupils who might have fallen behind and need to catch-up, particularly considering Covid, our pre-recorded video lessons and the fluency booklets for every sub-unit at Key Stage 3 and with a revision focus per theme at Key Stage 4 provide excellent support.

## **Progression in the MFL Curriculum**

### **Progression between Key Stages**

**Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3:** Progression between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 can be challenging due to limited flexibility in Year 7 MFL setting. Pupils do not necessarily continue into Key Stage 3 with the same language they studied at Key Stage 2 and the level attained at Key Stage 2 varies greatly. This often results in very mixed groups in Year 7 where some pupils are complete beginners while others have already attained a certain level in the language. For this reason, our Key Stage 3 curriculum assumes no prior knowledge of French or Spanish and it is left to the discretion of the teacher/department to adapt it for those who have.

**Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4:** The Key Stage 3 curriculum sets the foundation for Key Stage 4. Particular attention is paid to the three time frames with variation in the tenses (grammar) and every year we cover more sophisticated ways of expressing ourselves on a wide range of issues, expressing and justifying opinions with broader and deeper vocabulary knowledge. The units covered in our Year 9 curriculum act as a bridge between Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. For pupils not continuing with a language into GCSE, our Key Stage 3 curriculum provides them with a basic but thorough understanding of the language. It also gives them an overview of the culture(s) and people speaking that language globally.

### **We expect most pupils would choose to take their MFL to GCSE. Reasons to do so include:**

- Speaking a foreign language is an impressive skill and a real achievement; it can also be lots of fun.
- At Key Stage 4 you get to study a wide range of topics all about different people and cultures, not just how to speak. It can help you understand and talk to lots more people when you go abroad.
- Learning languages really improves communication skills. Research shows that speaking more than one language increases brain capacity, improves memory and reduces the risk of developing Alzheimer's.
- A language is a useful addition to any chosen career path and can raise salaries and increase chances of promotion.

**Key Stage 4 to Key Stage 5:** To transition to Key Stage 5 it is advisable to secure Key Stage 4 grammar and vocabulary and some pre-reading over the summer is recommended.

There are many reasons to take A Level Languages, such as:

- You will develop an in-depth understanding of the contemporary societies that speak that language and will be able to draw comparisons with your own.
- The A Level topics are fascinating and cover a wide range of interests: art, music, food, history, politics, cinema, literature and more.
- You will acquire a very good level of proficiency in the language and by the end of the course you will be able to say you are "fluent" in that language.

**Key Stage 5 to University:** Completing A Level will prepare pupils for a Languages degree or a language combined course. The wide range of topics covered over the two years, the IRP and the study of Works (texts and films)





prepares pupils for the academic and research demands of a Languages degree. Language courses at university offer you the chance to study an individual modern language or combine two or more (often including the history, literature, culture, and politics); translation and interpreting, as well as linguistics (the science behind language and communication) are also viable options. You can find more information [here](#):

## The MFL Curriculum Website

Our classroom resources are designed to put teachers in the driving seat. We provide centrally planned resources so that teachers can focus on preparing lessons for their individual classes and pupils. We have tried to be clear about the purpose of each resource, and all the resources we have produced support the principles shared in this document. Ultimately, once a teacher downloads and adapts a resource it becomes their lesson.

All resources can be found on the [United Learning Curriculum Website](#).

