



Hillside Primary School

MFL Curriculum Intent

At Hillside Primary School, our Modern Foreign Languages curriculum is designed to place the needs and aspirations of our pupils at the heart of their learning. Our bespoke curriculum is ambitious and inclusive, empowering every child to be a linguist, fostering a deep curiosity about other cultures to help them "Be the BEST they can be."

Our Languages curriculum intent is underpinned by four key attitudes for learning which are the values of our school. This ensures our pupils develop the confidence and resilience needed to thrive in the modern world:

- **Believe:** Developing the self-belief to communicate confidently in a new language.
- **Engage:** Actively participating in songs, stories, and conversations to embrace diverse cultures.
- **Succeed:** Achieving fluency and accuracy as they progress through their language journey.
- **Try:** Demonstrating the courage to experiment with new sounds, vocabulary, and sentence structures.

We deliver a high-quality MFL curriculum that equips pupils with the Substantive Knowledge (vocabulary, phonics, and grammar) and Disciplinary Knowledge (the tools of a linguist, such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing) essential for achieving and exceeding the expected standard. Our curriculum is anchored by four 'Big Ideas'—Communication, Culture, Connection, and Comparison—that build progressively. When pupils encounter a Big Idea, they revisit prior units to make connections, building the mental schema required to understand how languages bridge communities and open doors to the wider world.

BELIEVE: Building Confidence & Belonging

- Culture, Community & Communication (Big Ideas): We foster an environment where children believe in their potential as global citizens by exploring how people in other countries live, communicate, and share traditions.
- Vocabulary for Success: We believe that vocabulary is the gateway to fluency. Pupils build a progressive bank of language, moving from simple words in EYFS to mastering complex terminology, including high-frequency verbs, adjectival agreement, and grammatical structures.
- Inclusive Achievement: Through phonics-based lessons, scaffolding, and repeated exposure to familiar language, we ensure all pupils—regardless of background—believe they can access Age-Related Expectations (ARE) and beyond in their language learning journey.

ENGAGE: Curiosity & Connection

- The Wider World (Big Idea): We spark curiosity by opening a window to other cultures, allowing children to see themselves within a global context and appreciate the differences and similarities between their own lives and those of speakers of other languages.
- Personal Expression: Our curriculum encourages children to connect their personal experiences to the language they learn, allowing them to communicate about their families, hobbies, school life, and opinions with increasing spontaneity.

SUCCEED: Precision & Mastery

- Phonological Awareness (Big Idea): Success is rooted in a precise understanding of sounds. Pupils move from basic pronunciation to mastering phonemes and letter strings, allowing them to tackle unknown language with accuracy.
- Grammatical Foundations (Disciplinary): Mastery is shown when pupils can manipulate language to express themselves. This progresses from understanding simple noun genders and articles to conjugating regular and irregular verbs and using complex connectives to write detailed paragraphs.
- Substantive Mastery: Pupils succeed when they can recall and recycle previously learned language to incorporate it into new contexts, building a robust mental schema that allows them to communicate on a wider range of topics.

TRY: Resilience & Hard Thinking

- Communication & Interaction (Big Ideas): Pupils embrace "hard thinking" to move beyond simple recitation, learning to engage in short conversations, respond to questions, and justify their opinions in the target language.
- Language Resilience (Disciplinary): We cultivate a culture where children are not afraid to "try" new sounds and structures. By learning to "gist listen" and use context to decode meaning, they develop the resilience to navigate language they have not been taught before.
- Culture & Connection (Big Ideas): Children develop a global perspective by studying the diverse cultures of the target language, understanding that learning a new language is a key to unlocking doors to the wider world.

Through this vocabulary-rich, sequential curriculum, Hillside pupils do not just "learn" French; they begin to use the fundamental building blocks to help them think in a foreign language.

Hillside 'Big Ideas': Substantive Concepts & Vocabulary

Our Big Ideas act as the "connective tissue" across the curriculum, helping pupils retain crucial linguistic knowledge and build cultural capital.

Big Idea	Essential Knowledge	Vocabulary Examples
Communication	Expressing needs, opinions, and describing personal life.	<i>Verb, Connective, Pronoun, Opinion.</i>
Phonology	The building blocks of sound and accurate pronunciation.	<i>Phoneme, Gist, Accent, Intonation.</i>
Grammatical Structure	How language is built (gender, articles, conjugation).	<i>Conjugation, Gender, Determiner, Article.</i>
Cultural Connection	Traditions, lifestyle, and global perspectives.	<i>Tradition, Nationality, Geography, Identity.</i>
Transactional Skills	Practical application in real-world scenarios.	<i>Role-play, Interaction, Inquiry, Response.</i>
Linguistic Progression	Moving from single words to extended, complex discourse.	<i>Syntax, Spontaneity, Accuracy, Complexity.</i>

Working as a Linguistic: Disciplinary Progress

Strand	Year 3	Year 4	Upper Key Stage 2 (Y5/6)
Listening	Recognise familiar words in stories and songs.	Pick out key words/phrases in longer passages.	Listen and decode unknown authentic material.
Speaking	Communicate with simple words and short phrases.	Ask/answer questions; express opinions.	Spontaneous conversation and justification.
Reading	Match sounds to simple written words.	Decode meaning using cognates and context.	Use bilingual dictionaries to tackle unknown texts.
Writing	Write familiar words using a model.	Use connectives and negative forms.	Manipulate language; use full verb conjugation.