

MODERN LANGUAGES

Subject Description

The Modern Languages course builds on the language learnt at primary school and in S1 and S2 at the Academy. From session 2016-2017, pupils in S3 will have the opportunity to study both French and Spanish. Pupils will study French for two periods per week, and Spanish for one period per week.

The Modern Languages course seeks to develop pupils' proficiency and confidence in the skills of talking, writing, listening and reading in both languages, as well as their literacy skills. Pupils will do this by learning to use the languages in a variety of contexts, and will also learn more about the cultures of French and Spanish speaking countries.

Course Content

The French course looks at applying the French language in a variety of situations relevant to everyday life. It provides learners with the language necessary to communicate effectively within a personal environment such as teenage concerns, while also looking at understanding issues in a more global context, such as healthy eating and the environment. To this effect, a variety of media will be used in order to expose learners to new language with the aim of developing thinking skills and applying knowledge proficiently. It also seeks to increase the literacy ability of learners by focusing more closely on grammatical understanding and language structures.

The Spanish course will provide pupils with the opportunity to transfer the language learning skills that they developed so far, and apply them to learning a new language. Over the course of the year, pupils will learn the basics in Spanish, such as how to introduce themselves, numbers, and how to talk about their family and relationships. Pupils will also develop grammatical confidence and the course will provide a good foundation for pupils interested in studying Spanish at National 4 or 5 level in S4.

Progression and Pathways

In a global context, only 6% of the world's population speak English as a first language, with 75% being unable to speak any English at all. It is therefore becoming increasingly important to have an awareness of global languages and cultures. Learning a language not only allows pupils to develop a better understanding of this, but also to improve their self-confidence and enhance their literacy, problem solving, interpersonal and communication skills, as well as increasing their employability skills. Employers are increasingly seeking personnel who can operate in different languages. This is particularly evident in the areas of oil based jobs and business management. A second (and third) language not only gives prospective candidates an advantage, but it also provides them with the confidence to learn other languages. Closer to home, in the tourism and hospitality industries, competence in a foreign language is a great asset on a variety of levels.

Universities are also recognising the importance of languages and are routinely offering placements in European cities, providing a multicultural experience that is highly valued in a highly competitive job market. Universities are also increasingly encouraging more of their students studying in fields such as science and business to also consider studying a language, such is the global nature of today's world.

The S3 course will form a basis for French and Spanish at National 4/5 and Higher level, which will be on offer in the Senior Phase.

It is envisaged that all S3 pupils will have completed a National 4 Added Value Unit assessment in French by the end of S3, thus allowing them flexibility and choice in the Senior phase should they choose to pursue the study of the language.