



Foreign Languages – Spanish

Introduction

A multi-cultural environment is a rich environment. We, at St. Ann's Well L.E.A.D. Academy Trust pride ourselves in being a melting pot of ethnic backgrounds, languages, cultures and beliefs and this makes it imperative for us to offer every opportunity for our children to acquire an understanding of other cultures and languages. Having a firm belief in the benefit of teaching and learning a foreign language, the FL provision at KS2 in St. Ann's Well L.E.A.D. Academy Trust is designed to reflect this and also takes into consideration the primary FL entitlement as set out in the National Curriculum 2014. We recognise the value of this entitlement and provide age appropriate language learning opportunities for all children in years 3 to 6.

The focus language in our school is Spanish, a choice fully approved by the Governing Body too. Through our Foreign Languages (FL) programme we are doing our best to ensure that pupils begin secondary school keen to deepen their knowledge of Spanish and that they are prepared to learn other languages too. We want our pupils to be curious to explore other languages and cultures and to appreciate the benefits that language learning has for individuals and society. Above all we want to give our pupils a love of language learning that will bring opportunities for greater personal development as well as wider cultural, educational and employment opportunities in the future.

Through teaching Spanish at St. Ann's Well, we aim to preach a language learning process that is inclusive and enjoyable, with a focus on stimulating children's creativity through all the different activities that they are exposed to. We use a teaching and learning system that supports oracy and literacy and presents great opportunities for cross-curricular links. Learning another language is a strong support for the celebration of the international dimension. We are aware that because English is such a widely spoken language around the world, the motivation to learn a foreign language for English speakers is low and this is an incentive for us to promote awareness of cultural similarities and differences by stimulating and encouraging children's curiosity towards a foreign language, Spanish in our case.

Intent



At St Ann's Well, we believe that every child can succeed and we aim to provide the right conditions to ensure that every child does succeed! We strive to create a happy, harmonious learning community which provides education and care of the highest quality for every pupil. We want our children to leave St. Ann's Well feeling valued, confident and most of all with fond memories that they will cherish forever. To achieve this we aim to know every child as an individual knowing their strengths, weaknesses and what motivates them. To be happy at school every child must feel comfortable, safe and involved. A happy child is a learning child who will make progress and achieve great success!

The intent of our FL curriculum is to develop the confidence and competence of each child in the foreign language they are learning (Spanish) by providing a high quality education in FL. At St Ann's Well, we sympathise with children's anxiety and potential lack of motivation when it comes to learning a foreign language and we strive continuously to find ways and techniques to overcome these. Here, the educators have very high but at the same time realistic expectations when it comes to the acquisition of the foreign language and we ensure that our children are exposed to languages in an engaging, enjoyable and stimulating manner.

Our goal is for them to be passionate, curious and confident about their own foreign language learning abilities and to ensure that we build children's "cultural capital" so that they have a knowledge and understanding of the richness and diversity between cultures. We aim to properly prepare them for the next stage of their language learning journey by ensuring that pupils of all abilities develop solid foundations in the key language learning skills (phonics, reading, listening, speaking, writing and grammar). These skills will develop children's ability to understand what they hear and read and enable them to express themselves in speech and writing. We will extend their knowledge of how language works and explore the similarities and differences between Spanish and English. We will also help strengthen their sense of identity through learning about cultures in other countries and comparing it with their own. Learning Spanish will be a fun and meaningful process, providing students with many opportunities for both collaboration and independent work, which will empower the children to become inquiry based learners while improving their self esteem and sense of achievement.

Implementation and Impact



We believe that early exposure to languages is the key to success and so, we encourage the language learning process from Reception. In the EYFS and KS1, FL is experienced through whole school events (celebratory days, assemblies etc) and other curriculum areas, where children are exposed to a range of cultures and languages that exist in our world. Also, whenever there is a possibility, the children are exposed to Spanish in particular by listening to songs which allow for incidental learning of basic vocabulary. Each class teacher also has a list of common classroom phrases in Spanish (provided by the specialist language teacher) which they are encouraged to use throughout the school day.

In KS2 FL is taught by the specialist teacher, one session x 45 minutes per week for each class. Each half term has a corresponding unit of learning and within each unit there is at least one culturally related lesson.

Children are encouraged to express their ideas and thoughts in another language without fear of failure. They have opportunities to compare cultures and values of Britain and Spanish speaking countries, which will further on allow them to gain an understanding and appreciation of the world around them. The four fundamental skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) are covered together in an age-appropriate way. Knowledge and awareness of required and appropriate grammar concepts will be taught throughout all units at all levels of challenge. Where possible and appropriate, we link units to class topics and cross curricular themes. Children will build on previous knowledge gradually as their foreign language lessons continue to recycle, revise and consolidate previously learnt language.

Research shows that studying a foreign language improves children's analytic and interpretative capacities as well as their physical, linguistic, cognitive, social and emotional skills. Thus, we believe that teaching them Spanish is a great way to prepare our children for the next steps in their education and for the future beyond.

Curriculum Organisation

People do not learn their second language the same way they learn and speak their native language and as such we use a 'formal instruction' model where we have defined and chosen what our content would be, how we are going to move from word to sentence, to text level and then reinforce the learning over and over again because children do forget.

We know that a good curriculum design needs to:



- be well sequenced (eg teaching of verbs – not all forms are introduced from year 3);
- help children make connections between different aspects of learning (eg make pupils think of things they've learned before and link them to their current learning, such as vocabulary progression where with a rather reduced amount of words known, children can still build a varied range of sentences);
- succeed in getting children remember what they've learned.

Spanish is taught weekly across KS2 by the specialist language teacher. Spanish lesson plans are designed to meet the targets of the KS2 Programme of Study for Languages. There is a unit corresponding to every half term, which covers phonics, core vocabulary, grammar, cultural and social aspects. Language organizers are provided to children at the start of each half term. The designed scheme of work is based on the three pillars (phonics, grammar and vocabulary) and ensures pupils' progress through KS2, as well as transition into KS3.

Phonics

Phonics is taught systematically to ensure children's pronunciation is consistent. We believe early teaching of phonics boosts children's confidence in their ability to learn the new language, provides them with a stable bit of information (a set of rules) and makes their learning process easier by giving them certain independence. As part of our phonics teaching, we expose the children to stories told by native speakers.

Vocabulary:

We endeavour to choose the vocabulary carefully so that the children can learn it in manageable chunks. From simple words we progress to simple sentences and then to short texts. As part of our vocabulary enrichment, we expose children to short levelled (beginners, intermediate, advanced) stories with repetitive vocabulary. We have a school bank of stories (10 for each level) in pdf format, as well as hardcover ones.

Grammar:

Pupils learn basic grammar, building on their knowledge every year.

- We introduce some of the most important verbs in year 3 (eg. ser, tener, llamar, hacer, gustar) in 1st person singular, building on it in year 4 by adding 3rd person singular, in year 5 introducing 2nd person singular and ending with introducing all the forms in year 6.



- Nouns represent our main focus in year 3 when we build a core vocabulary for the children. Nouns are introduced alongside their definite/indefinite articles in order to smoothen the path for gender and plurals in the future.
- Adjectives are not introduced till year 4 (except colours and a few basic ones used for body parts or clothes).
- The determiner-noun-adjective agreement is introduced in year 3 when doing plural and gender, but students are expected to have a full understanding of it by year 5 and by year 6 children are expected to be able to deliver a descriptive paragraph with two adjectives for a noun with connectives.
- Although used from year 3 in very simple constructions, sentence structure is an explicit focus in year 6, which means that all the prior knowledge from year 3-5 will now be labelled.

Pedagogy

At St Ann's Well we promote the present/practise/produce model of language teaching. Our choice of pedagogy is based on Bill Lucas' work *Why leaders need to be learners* (2010). In this article, the author identifies twelve key learning principles, as follows:

1. Learning is life-long and part of what makes us human.
2. Learning and well being are closely connected.
3. Learning works best when the learner's prior learning is recognised.
4. Learning and context are closely linked.
5. Becoming an expert learner requires practice.
6. Learning that is worthwhile actively engages the learner.
7. Learning involves feeling, as well as thinking.
8. Learning involves social, as well as individual processes.



9. Learning involves doing, as well as thinking.
10. Learning requires reflection.
11. Learning is influenced by mindset.
12. Learning is learnable.

Bearing all the above in mind, we practice a mixed pedagogical approach to teaching FL within the curriculum, from structural (language learning reduced to a learnable set of building blocks) and cognitive (language learning as an information-processing event) to psychological (motivation and predisposition) and functional (spoken language over written language). From the classic way of teaching a language in the Grammar-Translation and Functional-notional approaches to the Direct method and Total physical response, we have developed a bespoke FL curriculum that we consider works best for our students at this point in time. Alongside questioning, modelling of skills, techniques and use of appropriate vocabulary in context, we also practice a mix of individual, paired and group learning, offering opportunities for the students to showcase their learning (links with the curriculum, cultural events studied). Our children are also exposed on a lesson basis to audio lingual and reading resources, which arouses interest and boosts confidence. The learning of a foreign language should be enjoyable and relevant for all pupils and a variety of approaches and activities should be used to challenge, motivate and sustain interest.

Development of Cultural Capital

This is what the Ofsted Handbook says about the cultural capital: 'It is the **essential knowledge** that pupils need to be **educated citizens**, introducing them to the **best that has been thought and said** and helping to **engender an appreciation of human creativity and achievement.**'



Language and culture are two sides of the same coin; closely related, there cannot be one without the other. In the language classroom, the cultural capital is essential as it dwells on attitudes and motivation on the part of the students (Dörnyei, 1998; Bartram, 2012). As part of our cultural capital, we want our children at St Ann's Well to have high self-esteem as well as understanding and respect for people from different cultures, lifestyles and customs. We want to expand their personal horizons and instil in them the love of learning, self-motivation and self-discipline. We want them to be flexible and adaptable, to think outside the box, to be good communicators and great problem solvers.

You might ask how is Spanish going to help with that?! Well, Spanish is the official language in 21 countries and is the fourth most widely spoken language, with around 450,000, 000 Spanish speakers in the world. Our FL curriculum makes sure to encompass at least one cultural lesson each half term, and we complement these with whole-school Spanish heritage assemblies and events. Nelson Mandela's words could not be more appropriate for us when talking about the cultural capital in the FL classroom: **"If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his own language, that goes to his heart."**