

French

Why is the study of French important?

The French curriculum provides our students with the opportunity to understand and appreciate the culture of – and communicate with – people around the world. Ultimately we want our students to have a love of languages and aim to achieve this by nurturing a linguistic curiosity (looking for patterns, attention to detail) and an intrinsic motivation to explore other cultures and people. Learning a language equips students with the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life. It encourages them to appreciate and celebrate difference.

The skills our students acquire whilst learning French transfer across into any workplace and prepare them for a globalised world of work. It has never been more important for young people to learn a foreign language than now. An outward-looking global nation needs a new generation of young people comfortable with the language and culture of our overseas trading partners.

Languages are a skill for life and knowing one language provides the foundation for learning further languages.

What skills will the study of French teach you?

Our curriculum is based around the three strands of essential language knowledge which transcend the study of a single language: phonics, vocabulary and grammar. All three of these strands are interdependent and are integral to every lesson, as they enable our students to speak and write more accurately, confidently and fluently and also enable them to manipulate the language, so they can be independent learners.

Furthermore, we equip our students with the skills to become resilient language learners, in order that they can unpick and decode unfamiliar language, and that they understand that mistakes are helpful in the learning process.

We devote time to making links with our own language, in order to facilitate learning, thus giving our students a better understanding of how their own language works and further broadening their English vocabulary. We

provide our students with strategies to enable them to acquire developed memory skills.

In addition, our students acquire the following transferable skills:

- literacy skills, including speaking and writing with an appropriate register
- attention to detail
- communication skills
- highly developed listening skills
- ability to perform well under pressure
- problem solving / logical thinking – they can see and apply patterns.
- creative thinking
- thinking on your feet
- team work

What will you know and understand from your study of French?

You will:

- broaden your horizons.
- understand the links between sound and spelling – have a strong awareness of phonology.
- develop your ability to communicate confidently and coherently with native speakers in both speaking and writing.
- deepen your knowledge of grammar and how language works and enrich your vocabulary.
- increase your independent use and understanding of extended language in a range of contexts.
- develop a greater awareness of the culture and identity of French speaking communities and countries.

How does your study of French support your expertise in other subjects?

The academic rigour brought about by one of the toughest assessment systems at GCSE means that students of French develop the skills required to help them become resilient in the face of the pressures of all exams.

Clearly being a good communicator is important in every subject and learning a language enhances these skills. The need for developed listening skills is also an important feature of every subjects' lessons. The links

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we make with English grammar and vocabulary help our students have a better understanding of their first language and a broader vocabulary.

How can you become an expert in French?

A novice learner is slow to recognise sounds and letters to produce words and structures and relies on their short-term memory. The information is not yet embedded in their long-term memory. You move from a novice to an expert learner, as your knowledge becomes automatised. Becoming an expert is going beyond the building blocks of learning: phonics, grammar and vocabulary, and establishing new knowledge and performing higher level tasks. For example, drawing inferences – where the intended meaning isn't explicit and where they don't recognise some words. An expert can then pay attention to more complex elements of language, and they can understand and produce longer stretches of language. They can draw on a variety of vocabulary and use grammar efficiently. They also gain competencies such as understanding of nuance and discourse analysis. The journey from novice to expert leads to pupils becoming confident language learners with the ability to immerse themselves in the culture and traditions of francophone countries.

What opportunities are there to experience French beyond the classroom?

Students can access the wealth of authentic materials on the Internet. In addition, there are lots of excellent language learning websites, many of which we subscribe to at school for our student's personal use at home. They can also listen to French radio and songs, watch French films with subtitles, and read the newspaper headlines.

How will you develop your character through your Spiritual, Moral, Social & Cultural experiences in French?

Spiritual

Students have the opportunity to reflect on religious beliefs and practices in different countries through our study of festivals, many of which are religious or

religious in origin. We focus on appreciating and celebrating differences.

Moral

At GCSE, several units ask students to consider points of view on topics such as marriage and divorce. We also debate the advantages and disadvantages of social media. Students are asked to dismiss stereotypes and reflect on what brings people together rather than separating them.

Social

Students are taught to show humility and compassion when doing peer assessment. All students are encouraged to participate individually, in pairs and groups in an atmosphere of mutual respect. This helps develop self-confidence and the ability to work collaboratively. Teachers ensure all contributions are valued and respected.

Cultural

Students are encouraged to reflect on aspects of their own culture and compare them with the cultures of Francophone countries. They learn about the use of social conventions.

Examples of SMSC activities in our schemes of learning include:

-explaining the cultural convention of when to address people as "tu" or "vous."

"French is all around us" starter activities in Year 7 to reinforce the fact that French culture is rooted within ours.

-comparing and contrasting religious festivals e.g. Christmas, Epiphany, New Year and Easter and other important days, e.g. Remembrance Day, Bastille Day, la Chandeleur, April Fools' Day.

-comparing and contrasting the education systems here and in France.

-discussing la Francophonie, in order that students understand that French is not solely spoken in France.

-studying various poems written by French speaking poets and a variety of French songs and exploring the messages of these poems, songs.

-covering the topics of homelessness, charity work, healthy living and the environment in Year 11, social media in Year 10 and family in Year 9.

-Classroom behaviour – anyone volunteering an answer, reading aloud or expressing their point of view is shown compassion and respect.

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Key Assessment Objectives

AO1 = listening

AO2 = speaking

AO3 = reading including translation into English

AO4 = writing including translation into French

How will you be assessed in French?

You will be assessed in the 4 skills areas of listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Furthermore, you will be assessed on your vocabulary and grammar recall.

There are formal end of year assessments in Years 9-11 and assessment, mastery and progress tests in Years 7-8.

How can the study of French support students beyond school?

The skills our students acquire whilst learning French transfer across into any workplace and prepare them for a globalised world of work.

Success in foreign languages at GCSE is seen an important indicator of academic ability and is welcomed by colleges and universities, whatever subject is chosen.

A GCSE in French may clinch our students a place when applying for increasingly competitive A level and degree courses.

You can do language modules with many degrees or do a combined degree with a language. French with accountancy, French with law, Primary Education with French, French with Business and International Relations and French are all popular degree choices.

Practically any job can involve languages, whether it is based in the UK or abroad.

How are the six principles of nurture embedded in French lessons?

Language is a vital form of communication

One of the 3 main pillars of essential language knowledge is vocabulary. In years 7 and 8 students are provided with learning homework sheets containing the key vocabulary / phrases needed across topic areas. At GCSE, students are provided with a vocabulary booklet containing the words AQA state could feature in their exams. We also focus on small, but important words, which can be a barrier to success if they are not know.

All our four skills – listening, speaking, reading and writing focus on vocabulary knowledge.

We make links with English to further aid our students with learning vocabulary.

The classroom offers a safe base

In the French department we have high expectations regarding behaviour and engagement in lessons. We follow the Scalby School behaviour for learning system outlined on p8 of the student planner), we have a matrix system for students who are causing a concern and we seek support from the SLT Active Patrol, where necessary. Pupils feel safe and know that whole school standards are applied consistently and fairly by all members of the department.

Children's learning is understood developmentally

Students are set according to ability and regular assessment allows changes to groups in consultation with the student and parent/carer. All teachers complete SEN Provision Maps for each class and these are saved on the Pedagogy platform and link to the SEN register and My Profiles. Knowing our SEN students well enables us to differentiate effectively - be it with coloured overlays, ensuring our instructions are clear and understood or ensuring we face a student who is hearing impaired when we are speaking.

The importance of nurture for the development of wellbeing



Students in French know that we offer a safe environment conducive to learning. We discuss the fact that mistakes are the stepping stones to learning and no-one should ever be worried about getting something wrong. Staff treat students with respect and students treat staff and their peers with respect. Students always greet each other and the teacher at the start of each lesson and ask how each other is feeling.

Aspects of our Schemes of Learning also focus on wellbeing. For example, in year 7 we discuss emotions and feelings and in year 9 we discuss relationships.

Our Assistant Teachers follow guidance written by the HOD so that they know how to best support students specifically in the French classroom.

All behaviour is communication

As part of Scalby School's behaviour policy, C3s and C4s are recorded. This information is monitored and followed up via the Pastoral Protocol. In the classroom, teaching staff and assistant teachers are aware of the wellbeing of students. Teachers understand that behaviour can be an indicator that a student is in need of additional support. Behaviours which are a cause for concern are raised with the Pastoral or SEND teams so the correct intervention and support can be put in place.

The importance of transition in children's lives

The school uses data from our primary feeder schools and from tests students take on introduction day to ensure they are placed in the correct set according to ability. We monitor progress very carefully and have regular set review meetings. If it is felt that any student would benefit from a set move up or down, contact is made with home, the HOY, and the SENDCo. Any set changes are handled sensitively.

In Year 8 students are supported during mentor time in making their options choices. As a department, we also offer students the opportunity to ask us questions about the GCSE French course and we discuss the course content and the benefits of learning a language.

In year 10, the French teacher from the Sixth Form College comes and speaks to our students about the French A level course and gives them the opportunity to ask questions.