



MFL Learning Area

LEARNING AREA

The Modern Foreign Languages Learning Area consists of a suite of four attractive study rooms. Each room can accommodate up to twenty-six students, which is the maximum for any one class. All classrooms have an interactive Multi-touch panel and a class set of mini 'show-me' whiteboards. Full, high speed Wi-Fi coverage allows suites of laptops to be used anywhere in the Academy. We are a forward-thinking department and embrace the use of online resources and new technology to enhance the experience of MFL for our students, such as Kerboodle, Linguascope, Exampro, Memrise and Triptico. There is a collection of DVDs, magazines and literature available to KS4 and KS5 students in the library. We embrace the use of authentic materials, such as songs and poems in our teaching and recently engaged the students in looking at Colonisation from a French and German perspective.

The Modern Foreign Languages team is energetic, motivating and relentless in its desire to find ever increasing and diverse ways of engaging students in language learning and creating independent young linguists. We offer French at GCSE and German at both GCSE and A level. We relish the opportunity to bring languages to life and have over the years welcomed Turkish and Belgian Walsall FC footballers, engaged with the China Matters programme, offered a taster of Japanese language and culture, after school Latin and Russian club, as well as working with Bristol and Aston University, with one of our students winning the Routes into Languages 'Mother Tongue, Other Tongue' poetry competition and two further students being awarded a Gold certificate for the 'Languages Immersion Challenge' at Aston.

STAFFING

Currently, there are six members of the MFL team; specialising in French and German for the curriculum, but offering a selection of other languages extra-curricula. We welcome trainee teachers and are highly commended by the University of Birmingham for the training experience we provide. The department is led by the Director of Languages and we also have a Head of French and a Head of German.

EXAMINATIONS

Last year 75% of the Year 11 cohort studied a language to GCSE and our EBacc score is one of the highest in the borough. At A Level we have a 100% pass rate, with students often pursuing languages to degree level and this year one of our linguists applying to Oxford.



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TEACHING AND LEARNING

The Learning Area groups students according to ability at KS4 and in mixed ability groups at KS3.

Key Stage 3

Students are taught French or German in Y7, each form being allocated a language on arrival to the school. 75% of students continue to specialise in that language for GCSE. Both Year 7 and Year 8 receive two 80 minute sessions of MFL per week and time is divided between the four main skill areas. Students at KS3 follow a modular programme to prepare them for the new GCSE. We wish to infuse our students with a love of language and culture; as a result we believe that the department is well-resourced to do so.

Key Stage 4

At Key Stage 4, students study for AQA GCSEs in French and German. Students continue to receive two sessions of MFL per week in Years 9 and 10. In Year 11 students have one weekly three-hour session and specialised support is offered after school as exams approach. Our expectation is that every student makes three levels of progress. This year 62% of the cohort achieved a grade 4 and above in French or German.

Key Stage 5

Students can study A level German in mixed lower and upper sixth groups. Students receive five hours of lessons per week and are encouraged to use their own time to increase their knowledge further by reading extra articles, listening to foreign radio, accessing online grammar resources, watching films/TV series, learning vocabulary online, attending weekly after-school conversation club and using resources available in the library.

ENRICHMENT

We believe that the World is bigger than Walsall and are continually seeking ways to enhance the experience of MFL at Walsall Academy. As part of our European Day of Languages activities and to promote a love of literature, we hold an annual poetry reading competition for all year groups. We enjoy an annual foreign visit, rotating between France and Germany. We visited Normandy in June 2019, Madrid in June 2018 and Munich in 2017. We also give our A level students the opportunity to undertake work experience abroad. Our A level cohort have the opportunity to join other departments and visit Target Language speaking countries, for example joining the Physics cohort in Geneva on a visit to CERN. We have now established solid links with our main feeder primary school through our MFL outreach programme, where A level students have the opportunity to offer after school MFL sessions. We welcome visitors to the department and have worked with Dr Debbie Pinfold from Bristol University and have links with Aston University through the Routes into Languages programme. We have a number of students in the school, who speak a home language and encourage them to gain certification in their additional language. We are a happy, forward-thinking and flourishing MFL team, in a school where Languages are very much valued and appreciated!