

Setting

In year 7 your son or daughter will be taught as part of their learning group. This is a mixed-ability group and the teacher will include differentiated materials when appropriate.

At the end of year 7 students sit an assessment that helps their teacher to put them in appropriate sets in year 8. Those students with particular ability in their first Modern Foreign Language (Spanish) will be in set 1 and will start their second MFL (French) in addition.

Most students in sets 1 and 2 are expected to continue with their MFL by starting GCSE courses in year 9. We are an inclusive school and so encourage all students with an interest to opt for a language in year 9. Therefore, during year 8 their teachers will work hard with them to ensure that they are able to make the best possible start to their GCSE studies in Year 9.

Online translators

We set homework tasks which are directly related to material covered in lessons and which therefore should be very straightforward for our students to complete on their own without additional help.

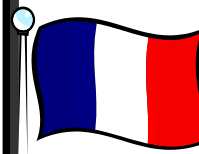
It is very obvious when an online translator has been used, for two reasons:

- 1) The vocabulary and language used bear no relation to what has been covered in lessons.
- 2) The translated material is usually full of errors and makes no sense.

Please do not encourage your child to use online translators! If extra explanation is needed the teacher will be more than happy to help.

Thank you.

If you have any questions about KS3 languages please contact
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A Parents' Guide to Key Stage 3 Spanish (and French)

Including:

How can parents help their son or daughter with their Spanish?

How to learn vocabulary successfully.

Information about homework tasks.

Our extra-curricular opportunities.

Setting information.

Useful websites.

Online translators.

Asking for help and advice.

How can parents help their child with their Spanish work?

It doesn't matter if the parent has never studied a language before – in fact this can be an advantage as many children enjoy being better at something than their parents!

- Take an interest in what your child is learning. Ask if you can help in any way.
- Ask your child to teach you some of the vocabulary that has been covered in recent lessons.
- Ask your child what the word is for (basic things like days of the week, numbers, colours etc).
- Encourage your child to test himself / herself regularly **in writing**, using the fan method. (See opposite).
- Encourage them to check their work for errors and redraft written pieces
- Encourage them to look back through their exercise books and grammar notes and prepare questions to ask their teacher for clarification of concepts not understood
- Provide a bilingual dictionary for helping with work at home and at school. (We recommend the Collins Easy Learning edition).

HOMEWORK

Your son or daughter will be set regular homework tasks by their Spanish teacher.

These are usually Written homeworks or Learning homeworks.

Written Homework

Teachers prepare students in class for all written homework tasks. All materials needed for the student to be able to complete the work successfully will be in vocabulary books or exercise books. The purposes of the written homework will be for the teacher to check that each student has followed what has been taught in class, has understood how to refer to the information provided in their books and, in some cases, is able to use additional reference materials (such as dictionaries) to adapt and extend their writing skills. Use of online translators is NOT acceptable and work will need to be re-done if they are used.

Learning Homework (see opposite)

Learning by heart is an essential skill in the study of any new language. Teachers will normally ask students to learn (for example) ten items of vocabulary taught and used in lessons, or the formation of a useful verb. The teacher will check that the students have learnt the material by setting a test. On occasions an 'open book' test may be set. This means that the teacher wants to ensure that the students are able to use grammar notes successfully and will expect them to refer back to material taught in class, usually on verb or tense formation.

To pass a test students must achieve over half marks. This means that a test with 10 questions is passed by those students who score 6 or more (or 5½ where half marks are awarded). Students who do not pass usually do so for one of three reasons: 1) failure to revise properly (i.e. not doing the homework to the required standard); 2) carelessness over detail (e.g. missing off accents) or 3) not understanding the work.

These students will be required to re-sit the test. Experience shows that those in categories 1 and 2 pass very quickly at the second opportunity (10 minutes of their breaktime, typically). Those in the third category usually benefit from one-to-one tuition from their teacher which is often more effectively done after school and followed there and then by the re-test once the student is more confident with the material to be tested. This is not a punishment but rather an opportunity for the teacher to ensure that the student understands the work covered and for the student to reach the expected standard alongside the rest of the class.

Learning vocabulary by heart using the fan method.

- Fold a piece of paper into fairly wide (approx 3cm) columns, as if making a fan.
 - In the first column, write the list of words in English.
 - In column 2, write the words in Spanish
 - Fold the paper so that only column 1 is visible.
 - Try writing the Spanish in the next empty column.
 - Unfold the paper and check your answers. Tick those you got right next to the English in column 1.
 - Cover the second and third columns and try again with those words you didn't get right previously.
 - Keep going until you can get the whole list right. This may take more than one piece of paper for some students.
 - Finally, test yourself again with the entire list.
- This really works so make sure you use this method every time you have vocabulary to learn.

Extra-curricular opportunities

We think it is important and fun for students to be able to use and hear the language in context and outside the confines of the Modern Languages classroom. We therefore offer the following activities for our Key Stage Three students:

- Residential trips to Spain in July of year 7.
- Exchange visits - alternate years to France and Spain. Open to KS4 (years 9, 10 and 11)

Please keep a look out for letters home about extra-curricular activities.

Useful websites:

Both French and Spanish:

www.languagesonline.org.uk
www.bbc.co.uk/languages

www.quizlet.com
www.memrise.com

For French:

www.didierbravo.com/html/jeux/index.htm

For Spanish:

www.abroadlanguages.com/al/la/spanish.asp
www.espanol-extra.co.uk