

Mandarin Curriculum Statement

Intent Statement

Students studying Mandarin choose to do so from Year 7 onwards. They do so because they and their parents understand the potential economic and cultural advantages of studying such an important foreign language into today's internationally orientated world. The Mandarin curriculum aims to develop a love and appreciation of the Chinese language, complementing the four skills of learning required for all foreign languages, namely reading, writing, speaking and listening, whilst also developing and extending the pupils' knowledge and understanding of Chinese culture, this ancient language and all its complexities. The curriculum is ambitious and designed to give all learners the knowledge and culture capital they may need to succeed in later life. In addition, it provides pupils with the opportunity to significantly develop their MFL literacy. Our students will develop skills and to become independent learners and critical and reflective thinkers. In the long term, we want students at Cowley to gain the knowledge and skills for future learning and employment both in the UK and China.

Pupils who engage with Mandarin are equipped to become more involved with the complex world in which they live, and to maintain throughout their lives a spirit of inquiry and curiosity that can not only make them more active in their communities, but also provide them with personal enrichment. We are a member of the Mandarin Excellence Programme (MEP) and all students will have an opportunity to visit China and develop their language skills in a natural environment. This unique opportunity will also allow our students to acknowledge a tolerance of cultural diversity, participation in community life and a contribution to Anglo-Sino relations.

Implementation Statement

We are committed to a student-centred approach that enables all students to flourish and reach their potential. As a department, we constantly review our curriculum and constantly promote a love of learning and aim to set the highest exemplary standards in all we do. Teaching is designed to foster a love of the language and a love of learning. We endeavour to help students master this complex language by making lessons fun. Students learn best when actively involved in lessons.

Teaching uses regular assessment to design bespoke learning to maximise progress. Resources and materials such as "GoChinese" are used to quickly assess each student's progress and to adjust future work accordingly. We use the "Jin Bu" textbooks 1-2 at Key Stage 3 which provide an excellent insight into the language and the culture of modern China. Our assessments provide progressive 'stepping-stones' for the mastery and recall of skills at KS3: they help to develop the students' skills that are progressively required as they move into Key Stage 4 and beyond. Essential skills such as translation, the reading and writing of Chinese characters and conversation are developed throughout both key stages. The content of study aims to promote engagement and interest in the language and develop curious and inquisitive minds. We aim to develop confident learners and young adults that are prepared to lead. They should have the ability to make informed decisions; the ability to communicate effectively; the ability to reflect and become independent and critical thinkers.

Beyond the Classroom

Year 7 - Intensive learning days to enhance the curriculum. In the recent past this has included Mandarin days at the University of Leeds.

Year 8- Intensive learning days to enhance the curriculum. Cowley as the host school will organise Chinese culture days involving MEP hub schools and Edge Hill University.

Year 9 - A 2-week residential trip to China. The trip is heavily subsidised by both the Mandarin Excellence Programme and by Cowley. Obviously as a result of the COVID-19 crisis, these plans are presently on hold, but we do intend to restart these as soon as possible.

Year 10- A 3-day online course and a daytrip to Lancaster University to practise Mandarin skills. Once again, the trip is heavily subsidised by the Mandarin Excellence Programme.

Subject Expertise

The Mandarin department comprises a full-time teacher and a support teacher assigned by MEP.

The subject teacher attends national Mandarin teacher meetings every academic term to ensure up-to-date learning events are taking place.

The support teacher delivers Chinese classes at local primary schools once a week. These classes are running as taster across the cohort, helping pupils to gain an understanding of a culture outside their own classroom, as well as their language skills.

The Head of Mandarin Department regularly attends MEP national meetings to share good practice and advice.

Destinations

Cowley students have traditionally performed exceptionally well in the KS3 National Hurdle Tests set by the MEP. The tests help the students to understand the importance of thorough revision in preparation for all their future examinations. Our students are well equipped for the complex world they live in. They learn the values of respect, tolerance and empathy with other cultures. They also have an understanding and tolerance of multi-cultural Britain. They build culture capital through our many links to China.

The Mandarin curriculum plays a significant role in the development of wider language acquisition. Our students are rigorously developing their four skills throughout the Mandarin curriculum and these skills are transferable to French, German and Spanish. Indeed recent data has shown that students who study Mandarin at Cowley perform also significantly better in their French/German classes than equivalent students who do not study Mandarin.

Impacts

- Learning Mandarin enables all students to become resilient, confident communicators.
- Attainment and progress continues to improve at KS3 & KS4.
- Many GCSE students continue to study Mandarin or related subjects at sixth form.
- KS4 and KS5 students maintain a high exam result in HSK language exams.