

A central graphic of a globe with a grid of latitude and longitude lines. Surrounding the globe are numerous circular speech bubbles, each containing a different national flag. Visible flags include those of Norway, Israel, China, South Korea, Australia, Italy, Germany, Canada, Spain, and others. The text is overlaid on this graphic.

Spanish Gloucester Academy

Greenshaw Learning Trust

Curriculum intent, implementation and impact

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Curriculum intent

“Our ambitious curriculum creates confident and successful linguists, who are given the opportunity to develop a comprehensive knowledge of the target language and a true appreciation and curiosity for language and culture, so that they are open-minded and global citizens.”

ambitious

Our Spanish curriculum is ambitious and challenging; using three time frames and complex structures from the very beginning. New language is introduced in chunks to enable better retention and faster transferral to long term memory, and grammar is initially taught implicitly so that students recognise patterns, but communication is not hindered. Previously learnt language is constantly recycled and built upon to increase complexity throughout the 5-year curriculum.

From Year 9, students begin learning grammar more explicitly, enabling them to be more creative and manipulate the target language effectively.

Our students choose to study languages at GCSE because they feel fully prepared and confident in their linguistic abilities.

confident and successful linguists

We believe that all students should have the opportunity to learn a language and feel successful in doing so. Therefore, all students study **one** language from Year 7 in order to achieve subject mastery. We prefer students to become masters of one language, rather than being less confident learners of multiple languages. This solid foundation in one language will enable students to become multi-linguists in the future.

We ensure that students are successful by carefully selecting the most impactful vocabulary and structures to enable them to communicate effectively from the very beginning of their language learning journey. Carefully selected content allows for more deliberate practice, chunking and input flooding of key structures to create automaticity in students' language abilities. We also take a positive marking approach to assessment and reward students for communication and pronunciation, even when language is not fully accurate.

This enables students to be fully prepared to undertake a GCSE in the language and creates enthusiastic, passionate language learners who feel confident in their linguistic abilities.

comprehensive knowledge

The 5-year curriculum is both cyclical and hierarchical, ensuring that students constantly retrieve prior knowledge whilst building in more complexity each year. Our curriculum is based on EPI (Extensive Processing Instruction) principles and is sequenced to help students better retain knowledge over time, making it accessible to all students.

In Years 7-9, students learn the foundational target language vocabulary and structures via 6 thematic contexts: My personal world, Lifestyle and wellbeing, My neighbourhood, Media and technology, Studying and my future, Travel and tourism. Each thematic context is repeated every year, with prior learning interleaved throughout and more complex vocabulary and structures built in as students progress through the curriculum.

At GCSE, students study an enriching range of topics within the same 6 thematic contexts, combined with challenging grammatical concepts which require higher-level thinking and well considered responses to help students develop the key skills necessary to continue on to higher education.

Every term from Year 7 to Year 11 begins with students explicitly learning and recapping the phonics of the target language in order to develop and improve their level of oracy in Spanish. Students participate in repetitive, chunked and engaging speaking and listening activities to promote memory retrieval and retention.

appreciation and curiosity for language and culture

We want students to not only feel confident, but also to develop a sense of pride and curiosity in learning a foreign language. We encourage students to explore new languages and cultures with openness and inquisitiveness, and help them to appreciate the value of understanding and producing a foreign language.

Experiencing our curriculum enables students to gain an appreciation for different languages and cultures as they will study relevant content in relation to a range of Hispanic countries. This enables students to create and develop their personal identity in relation to the wider world. Students will also develop a much richer understanding of the English language through the study of grammar, which will increase their literacy abilities and enable them to succeed in all subjects across the school, and beyond.

In Year 7 students first learn how to talk about their own experiences in relation to the 6 thematic contexts. This builds to topics which allow students to consider their identities within a wider context (e.g. equality, healthy lifestyles, travel and tourism). Eventually students are expected to discuss topics with a focus on themselves and others, including those from different cultures and nationalities. The curriculum builds to more challenging concepts in Year 11 where students are expected to express detailed and developed opinions relating to environmental issues, ethics and the wider world.

Curriculum implementation

“Our spiral-sequenced and research-based curriculum follows an Extensive Processing Instruction approach to foreign language acquisition, which mirrors the way we learn our first language as children: language introduced in chunks, implicit grammar, repetition, copying, and listening and speaking before reading and writing. We follow a MARSEARS sequence to build from comprehension to production, and eventually- spontaneity.”

spiral-sequenced

Our curriculum sequences content and skills in a spiral, hierarchical scheme of learning which builds throughout Years 7 to 11. Each year, students learn language and structures relevant to 6 thematic contexts. Each year, a new and more complex aspect of the theme is introduced so that students can add to their schema and expand their knowledge, whilst retrieving prior knowledge.

French Sequencing Plan

	Term 1.1	Term 1.2	Term 2.1	Term 2.2	Term 3.1	Term 3.2
Year 7	Me and my family	Sports and hobbies	Town and transport	TV and film	School	Holidays
Year 8	Relationships and role models	Food and drink	Shopping	Music	Future plans and opportunities	Tourist attractions
Year 9	Physical and mental well-being	Environmental and social issues	Social media and gaming	Work	Holiday accommodation	Module 1: Tu as du temps à perdre ?
Year 10	Module 2: Mon clan, ma tribu	Module 3: Ma vie scolaire	Module 4: En pleine forme	Module 5: Numéro vacances	Module 6: Notre planète	Y10 Mocks/PPEs
Year 11	Module 7: Mon petit monde à moi	Y11 Mocks/PPEs	Module 8: Mes projets d'avenir	REVISION		

Thematic Contexts:

My personal world	Lifestyle and wellbeing	My neighbourhood	Media and technology	Studying and my future	Travel and tourism
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Spanish Sequencing Plan

	Term 1.1	Term 1.2	Term 2.1	Term 2.2	Term 3.1	Term 3.2
Year 7	Family and friends	Sports and hobbies	Places in town and transport	TV and film	School	Holidays
Year 8	Relationships and role models	Food and drink	Shopping	Music	Future plans and opportunities	Tourist attractions
Year 9	Physical and mental well-being	Environmental issues	Social media and gaming	Work	Holiday accommodation	Module 1: ¡Diviértete!
Year 10	Module 2: Viajes	Module 3: Mi gente, mi mundo	Module 4: Mi estilo de vida	Module 5: A clase	Module 6: Mi barrio y yo	Y10 Mocks/PPEs
Year 11	Module 7: Un mundo mejor para todos	Y11 Mocks/PPEs	Module 8: El futuro te espera	REVISION		

Thematic Contexts:

My personal world	Lifestyle and wellbeing	My neighbourhood	Media and technology	Studying and my future	Travel and tourism
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Extensive Processing Instruction approach (Conti, 2017)

We follow the EPI approach to second language acquisition, which has been developed and published by Gianfranco Conti. This approach avoids cognitive overload by introducing language in 'chunks' as opposed to single words, and allowing more time for practice, interleaving and input flooding of the key structures to create automaticity in students' linguistic abilities.

The chunks of language are introduced using sentence builders, which leads to communication much sooner than the traditional approach of single words and grammar rules. Sentence builders are introduced to students through teacher-led listening and translation activities to allow for 'pushed output'; where teachers have total control over student output to ensure that students have ample opportunity to practise and recycle target chunks and structures. Similar to the listening activities, which utilise mini-whiteboards to assess student comprehension and retrieval, reading activities are tailored for students to ensure 90-95% comprehensible input, as "patterns are more likely to be noticed and acquired when they occur in texts which are highly accessible by the target students." (Conti, 2017)

Throughout the KS3 and KS4 curriculum, key structures, essential for communication, are repeated and used across different topics and in different contexts to enable students to recycle and use structures automatically.

We believe that this approach reduces cognitive overload, increases students' success and confidence, and improves communication in the target language.

language introduced in chunks

Introducing language in chunks (*e.g. je suis allé / el año pasado / quand j'étais plus jeune / siempre he soñado con*) means that students do not have to cope with processing single words, applying grammar rules, and deciphering meaning at the same time, enabling them to communicate more effectively sooner.

According to Conti (2017),

“The brain applies the patterns (chunks) available in our Long-Term Memory to interpret whatever we process (see, hear, feel, etc.) and make sense of it; **if what we process successfully using those patterns is ‘new’, the brain ‘hooks’ it to existing structures in the brain and compresses it in chunks which it stores in Long-Term Memory.**”

“This expands the processing capacity of working memory as when patterns are applied automatically, i.e. subconsciously, they by-pass working memory, thereby keeping the latter free for performing other operations...these processes are central to language acquisition, **our teaching must aim at fostering and facilitating them.** ”

implicit grammar

In Years 7 and 8 we teach grammar implicitly using the EPI approach. This means that students can recognise which tense a verb is in, which gender a noun and adjective is, and understand the nuances of the target language, without having to memorise and apply grammatical rules. Patterns in the target language are introduced through sentence builders and comprehension activities, and practised at the latter stages of the MARSEARS sequence to embed learning.

In Year 9, students are more successful when learning the explicit grammar rules due to this knowledge. Students are already confident with the language patterns from their initial years of language learning and can apply this more creatively as they learn the explicit grammar rules.

MARSEARS

We teach the target language using sentence builders. Each sentence builders follows a sequence of learning known as MARSEARS. This reflects the way in which we learn our mother tongue, meaning that students develop their language skills in a realistic way.

Modelling

Awareness raising

Receptive processing

Structured production

Expansion

Autonomous recall

Routinisation

Spontaneity

The parts of the sequence build from the initial introduction of new language to using the language independently and spontaneously.

- new language is introduced using sentence builders and modelled by the teacher through listening and speaking activities (**modelling and awareness raising**)
- students complete a variety of activities which assess comprehension and pattern recognition, and support them in learning the chunks of language and converting them to long term memory (**receptive processing and structured production**)
- students use the new language in a variety of speaking, reading and writing activities, recalling prior knowledge and using it appropriately (**expansion and autonomous recall**)
- eventually students are able to understand and produce language accurately and independently (**routinisation and spontaneity**)

Curriculum impact

“As a result of our accessible-to-all curriculum, students experience more success at an earlier stage in their language learning journey, and are able to communicate more effectively in three time frames, and express personal opinion with more confidence and accuracy, thus creating confident and successful linguists.”

accessible-to-all curriculum

Our curriculum reduces cognitive overload and introduces language in an accessible way which enables all students to succeed. Sentence builders provide a scaffold for students to follow until they feel confident to produce language more independently. The use of sentence builders also gives students the confidence to extend their writing and to enrich their speaking through knowledge of what makes a good sentence. Our students produce extended, accurate sentences and opinions from the very beginning; the criteria for a grade 5 at GCSE.

The EPI approach to language learning enables students to retain more knowledge thanks to the 'stickability' of chunks, and increases engagement and motivation as students feel successful.

In addition, the MARSEARS sequence has a powerful impact on language learners because it helps them to better understand how language works through extensive modelling and practice of speaking, writing, listening and reading skills. The sequences allows time for teaching key vocabulary and awareness raising before moving on to production which means that our students have higher engagement in languages, regardless of prior attainment or ability.

For teachers, the shared curriculum resources means decreased planning workload, and supports all teachers and trainees regardless of experience in teaching high quality language lessons where progress is visible and engagement is high.

more success

Our students experience more success in learning languages thanks to the EPI approach and the spiral-sequenced curriculum. Students constantly revisit key vocabulary and structures, whilst increasing complexity throughout.

We give students the chance to communicate in a range of tenses and for a range of situations from Year 7, meaning that they quickly become engaged learners who feel capable of learning a foreign language.

We prioritise phonics and pronunciation, and teach this explicitly throughout the 5-year curriculum. Students feel confident in using the correct phonics, and pronunciation is excellent.

We assess students positively and generously to ensure that they are rewarded for their communication skills as well as accuracy. Students are marked solely on pronunciation for their speaking until GCSE, and writing and translations are positively marked for communication of meaning.

More students choose to continue learning a language at GCSE.

communicate more effectively

Learning language in chunks means that students are able to communicate in full, extended sentences much sooner. Our students practise communicating orally before writing, and participate in frequent speaking activities where they practise pronunciation of the target language and develop fluency.

Our students learn how to communicate in three time frames from the very beginning. This enables them to communicate more effectively and naturally and means that they are practising tenses more often than if tenses were taught explicitly and in isolation.

confident and successful linguists

As described in our curriculum intent, our students become confident and successful linguists who continue learning a language at GCSE and beyond. Our custom-designed curriculum ensures that students are given ample time to practise key vocabulary and structures, whilst also being ambitious and challenging from the very beginning.

We believe that all students should have the opportunity to become linguists, thus students study one language in depth from the foundations in Year 7 to mastery in Year 11 and onwards.

Our curriculum has seen dramatic transformations within schools where languages were previously undervalued. Across our family of schools we have increased uptake and outcomes in both French and Spanish, supporting students to experience the rich and valuable life skill of language learning.