

Rationale for Language Learning at JGHS



“The limits of my language are the limits of my world”

Context

If we were to adopt a motto for the learning of Languages at James Gillespie's High School, it would most certainly be the above.

Our school aims to teach the importance and benefits of having multi-lingual skills in today's world, whether at home or abroad.

We want to encourage our students to widen their horizons through language learning and overseas travel, to become global thinkers and help them understand their important role as citizens in an international, multi-lingual world.

To achieve all the above and more, we strive to develop and improve our courses so that they remain attractive and relevant to the needs of our learners. All staff in the department keep their own skills up to date through constant research, overseas visits and attending relevant courses. We have the highest expectations of all of our learners and, resultingly, large numbers of pupils continue to study languages throughout their 6 years at JGHS.

We promote amongst our students an interest in the culture and traditions of the countries where the languages are spoken and we hope that through language study, students will develop a deeper understanding of other cultures.

Curriculum rationale

At JGHS, all languages are celebrated and are given equal value which is in keeping with the diversity of our school where more than 40 languages are spoken by pupils and staff. The school adheres to the Scottish Government's advice as presented in it's Languages 1+2 model.

At JGHS we currently offer the following languages up to and including Advanced Higher:

1. French
2. Gaelic
3. German

4. Mandarin
5. Spanish

Transition from Primary to S1 and S2

Upon arrival at JGHS, pupils continue to develop the skills necessary for successful language learning. All pupils in S1, except for our Gaelic medium pupils, will begin learning German alongside *one* of the languages previously studied in primary school. In most cases, this will be either French, Spanish or Mandarin. They will continue to learn both languages throughout S1 and S2 before making their S3 subject choice. Every effort will be made to ensure progression for each pupil's language study from Primary into Secondary, but no guarantees can be offered. Continuity of languages is dependent on the balance of Languages being studied across our 6 Cluster Feeder schools and availability of staff at High School.

The time allocation for Languages in S1 and S2

In S1 and S2 all pupils have three hours allocated to the study of a foreign language; they will study either Mandarin, French or Spanish for two hours per week alongside German, which is introduced as a beginner's language.

S3 and S4

Before the end of S2, pupils must decide which languages they wish to take forward to national certification at the end of S4. A pupil may decide to discontinue learning one of the languages studied and take up another (new) language. Whatever they choose, they must continue with **one of the languages** studied over S1/S2 throughout S3/4. As in S1 and S2, pupils will continue to have 3 hours allocated to the study of their chosen language.

The option to continue with a combination of languages is possible and encouraged for those with a particular aptitude and interest in languages. The opportunity for a young person to study several languages at JGHS is open to all.

Reciprocal exchange visits with partner schools in the various countries are available in S3/4 for pupils studying French, German, Mandarin and Spanish.

S5 and S6

Pupils who wish to continue learning a language beyond S4 can opt for Higher and Advanced Higher courses which are currently offered in French, German, Spanish, Mandarin and Gaelic. As with most courses in S5 and S6, pupils will have 5 hours allocated per week in which to learn their language.

Pupils in S6 who have an aptitude for languages and who study several languages are encouraged to undertake the Scottish Languages Baccalaureate; two of the languages must be studied to Advanced Higher level and one at Higher.

All staff in the faculty of languages pride themselves in being language-learning experts who use their linguistic skills to explore and experience other cultures. We aim to provide all young people with the same enthusiasm and skillset so that they too can go on to become proficient linguists with a passion for learning all languages.

We look forward to working with you when you join James Gillespie's High School.

Ryan Irvine
(Curriculum Leader for Modern Languages)