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Curriculum Matters: Languages

Why Languages Matter

Our goal at Lady Nafisa School is to instil a love of languages and a respect for the diverse cultures in our school community and in the wider world. We seek to extend students' views and teach them about the benefits of global awareness and cultural sensitivity. In our increasingly global communities, we want to teach students the significance of being literate, having strong communication skills, and speaking more than one language.

We believe in the 21st Century knowing a second language is not only beneficial, but necessary for success in life. The continual globalization of the world's economy is bringing diverse cultures and communities into more frequent contact with each other. The ease of global travel and the internet have collapsed the barrier of distance that once kept the world's communities separate. Employers and businesses are seeking applicants who can navigate the modern global economy. Learning another language also provides many other benefits including greater academic achievement, greater cognitive development, and more positive attitudes towards other languages and cultures.

In addition to meeting the needs of future students, language learning has been shown to greatly enhance student performance across the curriculum. Language learning has been shown to improve a student's cognitive function, including, but not limited to:

- Enhanced Problem Solving Skills
- Improved Verbal and Spatial Abilities
- Improved Memory Function (long & short-term)
- Enhanced Creative Thinking Capacity



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- Better Memory
- More Flexible and Creative Thinking
- Improved Attitude Toward the Target Language and Culture

Arabic language is closely associated with the religion of Islam. To this end, we have placed a **strong emphasis on the study of the Arabic language**; the spiritual and worldly advantages of which are obvious. Moreover, the Arabic language is a wonderful vehicle for sharpening the intellectual powers and connecting the aspiring student to their Islamic heritage: it functions in much the same way as Greek and Latin did in the Liberal education once afforded children in this country. Accordingly, students will throughout the course of their time, be exposed to Arabic on a daily basis. By immersing the students in this noblest of tongues, we hope to instil in them that love for the language that attends all those who truly live it.

What we teach

We teach **Modern Standard Arabic (MSA)** which is very close to classical Arabic (the language of the Quran and religious texts). MSA is the choice for schools teaching Arabic as a foreign language as it prepares students to access a wide range of literature as well as newspapers and everyday texts. We do not teach colloquial Arabic as time is limited within the curriculum and we feel it is more effective to learn when students travel to Arab speaking countries.

We also teach **French Language** as a second option for students who are enthusiastic to learn two foreign languages. We strongly believe in languages as a skill for life and something students should enjoy and find rewarding. Learning any language can make us more successful working abroad and builds resilience and agility. It provides 'cultural capital'.

We're living in the age of the soft skills, so being good listeners and communicators will not only boost the students' grades but also give them the edge in side hustles, networking and future life.

The programme of languages study at Lady Nafisa School aims to ensure that all pupils are equipped with the following skills.



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Key Stage 3

- Become increasingly familiar with the sounds and written form of a modern foreign language;
- Develop language skills and language-learning skills;
- Understand and communicate in a new language;
- Make comparisons between the foreign language and English or another language;
- Increase their cultural awareness by learning about different countries and their people, and working with materials from those countries and communities;
- Foster positive attitudes towards foreign language learning;
- Use their knowledge with growing confidence and competence to understand what they hear and read, and to express themselves in speech and in writing;
- Form a sound basis for further study at key stage 4 and beyond.

Key Stage 4

- Understand and respond to spoken and written language from a variety of authentic sources
- Speak with increasing confidence, fluency and spontaneity, finding ways of communicating what they want to say, including through discussion and asking questions, and continually improving the accuracy of their pronunciation and intonation
- Can write at varying length, for different purposes and audiences, using the variety of grammatical structures that they have learnt
- Discover and develop an appreciation of a range of writing in the language studied
- Listen to a variety of forms of spoken language to obtain information and respond appropriately
- Speak coherently and confidently, with increasingly accurate pronunciation and intonation



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- Read and show comprehension of original and adapted materials including literary texts from a range of different sources, understanding the purpose, important ideas and details, and provide an accurate English translation of short, suitable material.
- Write prose using an increasingly wide range of grammar and vocabulary, write creatively to express their own ideas and opinions, and translate short written text accurately into the foreign language

Core concepts

Our curriculum is built upon the following six core concepts:

1. Mechanics of Language (MoL)
2. Communication (CMC)
3. Comprehension (CMP)
4. Culture (CUL)
5. Internationalism (INT)

The core concepts mean that the active and passive skills of language learning are both covered by Communication (CMC) and Comprehension (CMP), while knowledge of grammar and structures are explicitly assessed via the Mechanics of Language (MoL) concept. This will ensure rigour in the teaching of grammar, something which we felt had diminished noticeably under the Listening/Speaking/Reading/Writing assessment model. The addition of Culture (CUL) and Internationalism (INT) means that we will have the means to regularly evaluate the students' development in this area as this is a focus for the GCSE specifications.

Themes and topics

Topics are set in common contexts, addressing a range of relevant contemporary and cultural themes. They are organised into five themes, each broken down into topics and sub-topics. The five themes covered in KS3 and KS4 are:

1. *Identity and culture*
2. *Local area, holiday, travel*
3. *School*
4. *Future aspirations, study and work*



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5. International and global dimension

All themes and topics are studied in the context of both the students' home country and that of countries and communities where Arabic/French is spoken. It is, therefore, important that students are exposed to materials relating to Arabic-speaking countries/French-speaking countries throughout the course.

Theme 1: Identity and culture

Who am I? relationships; when I was younger; what my friends and family are like; what makes a good friend; interests; socialising with friends and family; role models

Daily life: customs and everyday life; food and drink; shopping; social media and technology (use of, advantages and disadvantages)

Cultural life: celebrations and festivals; reading; music; sport; film and television

Theme 2: Local area, holiday and travel

Holidays: preferences; experiences; destinations

Travel and tourist transactions: travel and accommodation; asking for help and dealing with problems; directions; eating out; shopping

Town, region and country: weather; places to see; things to do

Theme 3: School

What school is like: school types; school day; subjects; rules and pressures; celebrating success

School activities: school trips; events and exchanges

Theme 4: Future aspirations, study and work

Using languages beyond the classroom: forming relationships; travel; employment



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Ambitions: further study; volunteering; training

Work: jobs; careers and professions

Theme 5: International and global dimension

Bringing the world together: sports events; music events; campaigns and good causes

Environmental issues: being 'green'; access to natural resources

How we teach

We are aware that pupils bring to school different experiences, interests and strengths that will influence the way in which they learn, and we take this into consideration when planning approaches to teaching and learning which will allow all pupils to participate fully and effectively.

The scheme of work is designed to cater for pupils working at levels 9-1. It is also designed to be challenging and raise expectations. We recognise that all classes have children of widely differing abilities. Suitable opportunities are provided for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability and experience of the pupil. We plan for individual needs, differentiating to allow all to achieve, building self-esteem and fulfilling our aim to give all pupils the opportunity to experience success in learning and to achieve as high a standard as possible.

We employ different teaching methods that actively engage our students in meaningful and experiential learning as well as trigger their curiosity. We endeavour to do this through careful questioning, peer-and-self-assessment and through interactive methods of teaching and learning. Real communication is the central thread to our lessons and the teaching of grammar is considered vital to develop genuine independence in the students' ability to express themselves.

We establish a classroom environment that stimulates and encourages students to communicate in the target language as much as possible, as well as to take on challenges and risks in their learning.



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It is also important that our students are given access to a wide range of resources, including the use of ICT and authentic materials. Enrichment activities are offered, whenever possible, including extra-curricular trips abroad and themed days.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Assessment in MFL is carried out in line with the school policies on Marking and on Assessment. Most assessment is formative and is used to support teaching and learning and inform future planning. The MFL teacher assesses the children's progress in the target language based on their achievement of the learning objectives in lessons. KS4 students will be assessed on speaking, reading, listening and writing according to Edexcel (GCSE Arabic) /AQA (GCSE French) exam board guidelines.

Why choose Edexcel GCSE Arabic?

At LNS we believe languages should be accessible for all students. In the Edexcel Arabic GCSE course special care has been taken to ensure all our papers are designed to be clear and concise and, where appropriate, questions feature scaffolding to help all students progress through the assessments confidently.

Reading and listening papers are structured so that questions set in the target language are in a separate section from those questions requiring responses in English. Both papers are also structured so that they are progressive in their level of demand with the most demanding question being the final question in the paper.

Edexcel provides an engaging and inspirational course of study that will enable your students to manipulate and use the target language effectively, independently and creatively, so that they have a solid basis from which to progress to A Level or employment.

Why choose AQA GCSE French?



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LNS's objective is to enable students of all abilities to develop their French language skills to their full potential, equipping them with the knowledge to communicate in a variety of contexts with confidence.

We believe that AQA specification stimulates students' cultural knowledge whilst developing their language skills. It also offers a comprehensive range of support and resources to assist the teaching and assessment preparation.

We are confident AQA's assessments will deliver the right results for our students by ensuring that the assessments are clear and accessible.

Its impact

When students finish LNS, we aim for all students to have achieved at least one foreign language GCSE, approximately 50% of each cohort will achieve two.

Upon completion of five years at LNS, students will be able to

- understand the gist of a range of authentic passages in familiar contexts.
- Take part in discussions covering a range of factual and imaginative topics. They give, justify and seek personal opinions and ideas in informal and formal situations. They will be able to confidently deal with unpredictable elements in conversations, or with people who are unfamiliar. They speak fluently, with accurate pronunciation, and can vary intonation.
- Show that they understand a wide range of authentic texts in familiar contexts. They summarise, report, and explain extracts, orally or in writing.
- Pupils communicate ideas accurately and in an appropriate style over a range of familiar topics, both factual and imaginative. They write coherently and accurately.

Overall, the MFL department hopes to develop their students' all-around education and competencies needed to enter the world of work after their full-time education.