

Spanish

Curriculum Principles

By the end of their education, a student of Spanish at Dixons Brooklands Academy will:

- know of the culture and history of Spain and of the Spanish language. Students will know how to communicate fluently, to an exceptional standard, for a variety of different purposes. Students will be able to communicate in written and spoken form, with confidence, about themselves and the world around them as well as important social and cultural issues such as climate change, poverty and educational inequality.
- understand why the study of an additional language is a valuable pursuit. Students will understand that a deep understanding of another language and its culture enriches their own and provides them with an edge in an ever-demanding job market.

It is the vision of the Spanish department at Dixons Brooklands Academy to inspire a love of language learning, providing a deeper understanding of other cultures and to give the students the confidence to communicate in Spanish.

In order to achieve a true understanding of Spanish, topics have been intelligently sequenced based on the following rationale:

- The Dixons Brooklands Academy Spanish curriculum is built upon the linguistic concept of lexicogrammar. Lexicogrammar is a term used in systemic functional linguistics and emphasises the importance of recognising the interdependence of – and continuity between – vocabulary (lexis) and syntax (grammar). We avoid thinking of grammar and vocabulary as discrete, separate, phenomena. This concept has recently been popularised and elaborated upon by Gianfranco Conti and Steve Smith. For further reading, see Chapter 5 of ‘The Language Teacher Toolkit’ by Conti and Smith.
- In practice, this means that students in Year 7 and Year 8 will never have lessons teaching them a grammatical concept in isolation. Instead, students are introduced to verbs - across all tenses - as items of vocabulary. The knowledge is also introduced in different contexts in order to support flexible application or, put more simply, to avoid students learning it by rote.
- However, an explicit understanding of how to manipulate grammatical structures is a crucial skill, particularly for more complex translations. From Year 9 onwards, therefore, students will be taught grammatical concepts explicitly.
- Teaching of phonics is a part of the Y7 and Y8 SoW. This is contextualised, not a standalone activity. In lessons phonology is developed through repetition of sentences, reading aloud & dictation which are essential for developing secure sound-spelling relationships. (Erler 2004; Baddeley 1974) The aim is for students to have confidence in understanding and producing the key SSC by the end of Year 8 which will result in better understanding for the listening assessment and improved pronunciation in KS4.
- Content is delivered through a spiral curriculum design. Students revisit key themes with increasing complexity so that the language is constantly reinforced, secured and extended. We interleave vocabulary and grammar and implement spaced learning and retrieval practice to ensure knowledge is transferred to long term memory.
- We follow the EPI approach (Extensive Processing Instruction) which favours flooding comprehensible input and empowers the learner with linguistic tools, high frequency structures and vocabulary.

The Spanish curriculum will address social disadvantage by addressing gaps in students’ knowledge and skills:

- Oracy can be a key determining factor in a child’s future social and, ultimately, professional success. Unfortunately, students from disadvantaged backgrounds do not always have same level of social and cultural competence as their non-disadvantaged peers. As a result, the Spanish curriculum strongly promotes the development of expressing one’s views on a variety of social and cultural topics in a public setting. To develop these skills the curriculum aims to normalise speaking confidently in front of others by practicing vocabulary through chanting and repetition of sentences. Students will also independently answer questions in short, full, sentences in front of their peers.
- Reading is the gateway to learning and is key to future academic achievement and well-being. Therefore, the Spanish curriculum develops students self-efficacy as readers through regular opportunities for students to hear high-quality, expressive reading and to practise high-quality reading of a range of authentic and fictional texts.
- In Spanish, we do not only cover the Spanish language, but students are exposed to a range of cultural events, festivals and traditions from a variety of Spanish Speaking countries which are explicitly planned in the curriculum. It is important for our students to think about the cultural differences that exist between countries or people with different backgrounds as we live in a multicultural society. This is particularly important in our school as the cohort that we have belongs in its majority to a similar cultural background and will otherwise not be exposed to some of the situations which we debate in Spanish. Understanding the cultural differences and traditions from other countries will help the students’ understanding in listening and reading.
- We ensure that knowledge navigators and sentence builders are accessible for all students. In lessons we use scaffolding techniques, targeted cold call and Do Now, Review Now to address gaps in knowledge and teachers are responsive to students needs. Planned intervention and prevention strategies are implemented where necessary.

- Teachers are knowledgeable about and are able to identify and support SEND and disadvantaged students within their classes and plan appropriately.

We fully believe Spanish can contribute to the personal development of students at Dixons Brooklands Academy:

- Students will develop their social competence in Spanish. They will develop their understanding of how people from different communities and countries have different value sets through the study of Spain and Hispanic countries and will develop their ability to speak formally about a range of important social issues.
- The Spanish curriculum offer will also provide students with a multitude of opportunities to understand right and wrong and different ethical and moral viewpoints. For example, students will learn about the importance of voluntary work and helping in the community, poverty around the world, the importance of charities and various issues surrounding social inequality.
- Many of the contexts in which students practice their use of the target language facilitate opportunities for personal development. Students will study topics such as staying fit, eating healthily, the dangers of alcohol and drugs, healthy habits with regards to mental and emotional health.

At KS3 and KS4, our belief is that homework should be interleaved-revision of powerful knowledge that has been modelled and taught in lessons. This knowledge is recalled and applied through a range of low-stakes quizzing and practice.

- Students across year groups are required to complete traditional revision using techniques such as flash cards and Read, Cover, Write, Check.
- Students in KS4 have access to LanguageNut where they complete a series of tasks on a weekly basis.
- Students in KS4 also complete weekly vocabulary tests and reading/translation practice with the aim of supporting retention of key vocabulary and exam technique needed for the GCSE reading paper.

Opportunities are built in to make links to the world of work to enhance the careers, advice and guidance that students are exposed to:

- Many of the contexts in which students study Spanish facilitate opportunities to discuss careers and the positive impact that learning an additional language can have on job prospects. Students discuss topics such as future job ambitions, work experience placements and why learning a language is important.
- Students across all year groups have the opportunity to take part in extra-curricular activities such as KS3 Spanish & Latin American cooking club, Fútbol Lingo sessions and Onatti theatre production with the aim of broadening students understanding of how the Spanish language can be used in a variety of different fields.
- Students receive assemblies specifically focused on careers using languages during the week of European Day of Languages. Key year groups also have the privilege of listening to current language students at University talking about their experiences studying and of their year abroad.

We teach beyond the specification requirements, but do ensure students are well prepared to be successful in GCSE examinations:

- Year 11 students will receive revision lessons that sit alongside the main curriculum; these lessons provide students with the social and cultural capital they will need in order to be successful in their examinations.
- Pupils will receive additional language practice on a 1-to-1 basis with our Foreign Language assistant in preparation for their speaking exam.

