



At Firs Primary School, children speak over 50 different languages. We see this linguistic diversity as a strength and a valuable resource for learning.

Our MFL curriculum celebrates and builds on this rich linguistic heritage. We aim to inspire a love of language learning, helping all pupils to see languages as exciting and achievable.

Through progressive teaching, pupils develop skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing, while making meaningful connections between languages. Our approach develops curiosity, respect, language awareness and cultural understanding, preparing pupils for a linguistically and culturally diverse and globally connected world.

Why a multilingual approach?

Learning about how languages work alongside learning individual languages develops pupils' language and metalinguistic awareness, helping them recognise patterns, make connections and develop strategies for learning unfamiliar languages (Busse et al., 2019).

Using pupils' existing languages as a tool can support language awareness, metalinguistic understanding and the ability to make connections between languages. Comparing sounds, vocabulary, grammar and writing systems helps children understand how languages work and develop strategies for approaching unfamiliar language. (Veerman et al., 2025).

At Firs, we value the languages our pupils already know and use them to support new learning. Our approach helps pupils to:

- notice patterns and make connections between languages;
- use prior knowledge to work out unfamiliar language;
- become more curious and confident language learners;
- develop respect for linguistic and cultural diversity.

Why Discovering Language?

We introduce our KS2 pupils to MFL using the *Discovering Language* approach developed by the Association of School and College Leaders.

Rather than learning one language in isolation, pupils explore a range of languages and language families, becoming language detectives who listen, investigate, compare and make connections.

Children explore: SOUNDS → WORDS → WRITING → GRAMMAR → MEANING → CULTURE

Language-specific and non-language-specific lessons develop understanding of language structure, spelling patterns, similarities and differences, language history and the cultures associated with the languages studied.

At Firs, this approach provides a natural link due to the many languages represented in our school community and the languages pupils encounter through our curriculum. The *Discovering Language* approach is particularly well suited to Firs because it develops transferable language-learning skills through making connections across languages, while valuing and reflecting the multilingualism of our school community.

How do we teach MFL?

Whole School

We celebrate our linguistic diversity throughout the year. Our Young Interpreters programme is delivered across the school in the autumn term, enables pupils to use their language skills to welcome and support children new to English. Events such as European Day of Languages and International Mother Language Day also help pupils to appreciate the richness of the world's languages and cultures.

EYFS & KS1

Although MFL is not statutory, children develop awareness of language diversity through songs, rhymes, games and greetings in different languages, sometimes linked to wider topic learning.

KS2

Pupils first explore language families, grammar, spelling and sound patterns, language development, similarities and differences, and associated cultures as an introduction to language learning, following the *Discovering Language* approach.

This is followed by our multilingual curriculum which is delivered on a two-year cycle, with specific language learning: German and Latin in Year 3 and 4; and, Spanish and Russian in Year 5 and 6. Teachers use visuals, partner work, sentence stems, word banks, substitution tables, songs, film and supported speaking activities to make learning accessible and engaging.

Russian is taught by a Russian-speaking teaching assistant who holds a recognised TRFL qualification.