

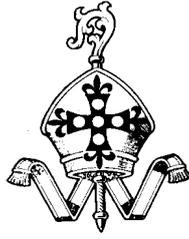
# **WHITGIFT SCHOOL**

*UPPER FIRST FORM*

*LANGUAGE CURRICULUM*

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**2015 - 2016**



## **Upper First Form 2015/2016**

All Upper First pupils study one Romance language (French or Spanish), one Oriental language (Japanese or Mandarin Chinese) and one language whose grammar is based around a case system (German or Latin). We consider that exposure to three such different language systems opens pupils' eyes to the way Language works, creating learners who are able to analyse their own language more effectively as well as acquire foreign ones with a greater level of accuracy and understanding. Pupils will continue two of the three languages they have studied in the Upper First into the Third Form.

We aim to engender a reflective and inquisitive approach to language learning which places the emphasis on the **process** of language acquisition. Creativity, deduction, detective work, exploring links and independent engagement are the key to successful language learning.

### **FRENCH**

Lively, fun lessons make French an enjoyable subject for boys joining the School. The resources used present authentic written language in interesting contexts with plenty of opportunity for creative as well as structured writing and more advanced reading exercises which are challenging and enjoyable. The course provides a lively communicative approach with a clear grammatical progression, and gives a thorough grounding in French. Boys are also introduced to a variety of resources which they can use for independent learning and practice. Differentiation in lessons takes account of the varying levels of pupils joining the school and French is accessible to beginners as well as those with some prior knowledge. The Upper First French course prepares pupils well for the exciting exchanges they can take part in during the Lower Third and beyond.

### **SPANISH**

The main aim of the Spanish department is to ensure that pupils enjoy learning Spanish and consider the knowledge of Spanish as a useful tool for life.

From the beginning, boys are taught largely in the target language and are then given ample opportunity to practise their language skills. The resources used are very stimulating and thorough. The communicative element of lessons encourages the pupils to use Spanish creatively right from the start. The emphasis of this year is not only to lay down a solid grammatical base and increase the boys' range of vocabulary, but also to build up their confidence so that they use Spanish with enthusiasm. An integral part of the course is knowledge of Spanish-speaking countries, which they will develop through reading and videos.

## **JAPANESE**

During the first half term boys concentrate on learning the hiragana syllabary, along with simple spoken phrases to introduce themselves. By Christmas they are able to read and write short paragraphs in Japanese, and give an oral self-introduction. At the same time, boys start to master some of the kanji characters originating from China, which are artistic and exciting to learn.

Over the next two terms, boys work towards writing essays in Japanese, covering topics such as their likes and dislikes, food and drink, family, daily routine and much more. Throughout the year there is a strong emphasis on the spoken language, and there are opportunities to practise with the native speaking Japanese Tutor. Boys are always amazed at how much they learn in such a short time.

The resources used are lively, colourful and include articles covering aspects of modern Japan such as pop groups, teenage fads, martial arts, manga, anime, Japanese food, etc. There is also extensive information on the more traditional aspects of Japanese culture, which play an important role in the course as a whole.

The ICT component of the course includes learning how to word-process in script and the use of a range of Japanese language and culture websites.

## **MANDARIN CHINESE**

The Chinese course is a challenging and very exciting one for pupils. The four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing are all taught. Emphasis is placed on speaking and writing as these are the two most difficult skills to master.

Boys are supported in the acquisition of Chinese characters through carefully structured writing sheets, individual mini-flashcard sets, games and creative work. Characters that need to be learnt off by heart are carefully chosen, whilst boys are able to read many more.

By the end of the year, pupils should be able to comfortably recognise around 250 characters and write around 120 of those from memory. Topics taught include Self-Introduction, Numbers, Family, Pets, Hobbies and Sports. Culture is integrated as part of the course, including the study of some geography and Chinese festivals.

Due to the nature of the language and its script, the Mandarin Chinese course is an intense and challenging one requiring much dedication. This means of course that the sense of satisfaction at the end of the year is very high.

## GERMAN

The German course in the Upper First focuses on quickly acquiring a range of language that would be useful during a visit to Germany. Many of the pupils attend the popular exchanges to Nuremberg (L3rd), Munich (U3rd) or Berlin (L5th), and we teach them the authentic language and the cultural context in order to enable all boys to use German in real-life situations.

The course covers the topics of home life, my school, hobbies and living abroad and this is combined with clear grammatical progression. Resources are colourful and lively, and provide an in-depth introduction to the language and culture of today's German speaking countries via a wide range of differentiated activities that are enjoyable and motivating. Lessons are taught principally in German and focus on developing all four skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. The course also encourages grammatical awareness and more traditional methods of language study, such as regular vocabulary learning, as well as a lot of pairwork tasks. Boys will have many opportunities to practise their newly acquired language skills using interactive software, such as many authentic German websites, in the computer suites. This helps pupils acquire the habit of independent learning which will help them in their language learning higher up the school.

## LATIN

The main text book is the *Cambridge Latin Course (CLC)*, Unit 1. This is sufficiently self-contained to be a course in its own right, as well as providing a good introduction and sound base for subsequent years.

There are two main aims. The first is to teach comprehension of the Latin language for reading purposes. The second is to develop from the outset an understanding of the content, style and values of Roman civilisation. The course presents the language not as an end in itself, nor as an instrument of general mental training, but rather as a means of gaining access to a literature and the culture from which it springs.

The material of Unit 1, containing as it does authentic topics and characters, is set firmly in a Roman context and is centred on the family of the banker Caecilius Iucundus, who actually lived in Pompeii in the first century A.D. The story-line from chapter to chapter gives a very real insight into the social structure and culture of the town in the year before the eruption of Vesuvius (e.g. Education, Daily Life, Slavery, Religion, Political organisation, Gladiators, Baths).

Although the objectives and teaching emphases are quite specific (fluent reading/study of Roman Civilisation), the skills imparted are contrastingly diverse. Linguistic, analytical, dramatic, artistic and inter-personal skills are enhanced through a variety of techniques (such as translation, role-play, art-work, comparative studies [through videos and I.T projects/programmes], Latin tapes) and all these elements interlock in what has proved to be a stimulating and hugely enjoyable course. There is a popular biennial visit to Rome and Sorrento, which complements the above material.