

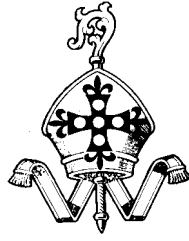
# WHITGIFT SCHOOL

*UPPER FIRST FORM*

*LANGUAGE CURRICULUM*

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**2010 - 2011**



## **Upper First Form 2010/2011**

### **FRENCH**

In both the Upper First and Lower Third Forms the major emphasis is on oral proficiency, with skills being developed through audio and group conversation work. The textbooks used present authentic written language in interesting contexts with plenty of opportunity for writing and more advanced reading exercises which are thorough and enjoyable. The course provides a lively communicative approach with a clear grammatical progression, and gives a thorough grounding in French, based on a combination of learning through understanding and language acquisition through enjoyment and practice. An exchange with a school in Caen runs for the Lower Third. Boys travel to France during the Easter holiday and stay with families, whilst participating in group visits during the day. The French party also spends a week with the boys in England.

### **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) or to Munich (U3rd) 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 has a topic based approach combined with clear grammatical progression. The textbook *Echo 1* is very thorough and stimulating and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. It is colourful and lively, and provides 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 the emphasis at this stage is 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 Boardworks and many authentic German websites in the computer suites. This encourages independent learning and makes sure all boys are keeping up with the work.

## **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, school, daily routine and much more. Throughout the year there is a strong emphasis on the spoken language, and there are regular opportunities to practise with the native speaking Japanese Tutor. Boys are always amazed at how much they learn in such a short time.

The coursebook 'Ima 1' is lively, colourful and includes plenty of up-to-date photographs and articles covering aspects of modern Japan such as pop groups, teenage fads 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 word-processing in script, and use of a range of Japanese language and culture websites.

## **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. Four boys from this year group represent Whitgift in the regional Latin Reading Competition in the Michaelmas term of the Lower Third year.

## **MANDARIN CHINESE**

The Chinese course is a challenging and very exciting one for our pupils. The four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing are all taught, but due to its difficulty, more time is spent on writing practice and mastering the Chinese characters.

The skill of reading and writing the characters is mastered through carefully structured writing sheets, mini flashcard sets for each boy, 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, around 250 will be recognisable to the boys of which they will be able to write 120 or more.

By the end of the year, boys will be able to talk and write about themselves and their families, likes and dislikes, hobbies, nationalities and much more. Culture is taught as an integral part of their course, including the study of some geography, the Chinese New Year and much more.

Due to the nature of the language and its script, the Mandarin Chinese course is an intense and challenging one requiring much dedication.

## **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 in the target language and are then given ample opportunity to practise their language skills. The course book *Listos* is very stimulating and thorough. Its communicative element 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.

## **BILINGUAL PROGRAMME**

**At the end of the Upper First Form**, up to 16 boys will be offered places on the Bilingual Programme for the French, German or Spanish bilingual classes. This unique programme, which has been running for thirteen years, and is taught by native speakers, allows for the advanced study of the culture, history and geography of these countries in French, German or Spanish. This course is **additional** to pupils' other two language options.

The aim is to bring the pupils up to a high level of fluency and the Programme culminates in prestigious internationally recognised examinations in the Upper Fifth, giving them an extra qualification useful for working abroad later on. The boys will also go on an exchange and a Bilingual trip each year and will use modern

information technologies to work on projects with students from the three relevant countries adding a real purpose to their language studies. The recruitment process for the Bilingual Programme begins during the Upper First Form and is based on the End of Year Exam result, teacher recommendation and an interview.

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