



## Languages- Meet the subject leader

It is an absolute privilege to lead and teach languages across our three Key Stage 2 classes. Pupils from years 3-6 receive an hour of languages learning per week across the entire year. This significant commitment to the curriculum is based on a firm belief that learning languages prepares pupils to participate in a rapidly changing world in which work and other activities are often carried out in languages other than English. The rise of international commerce means that pupils need to be equipped with the skills needed by the international workplace.

The teaching and learning of a new language also has significant benefits for the children's developing knowledge of their own language as their understanding of word class and grammatical structures expands.

At West Rainton Primary School, the languages curriculum is predominantly centred around French. Alongside English, French is the only language spoken on all continents of the world. It is also the second most widely-taught language across the world after English. In an ever-growing technological world, French is also the third most common language used online after English and German. Learning French gives children a good foundation from which to learn other Latin-based languages such as Spanish, Italian and Portuguese as well as a deeper understanding of the roots of English. Through close relationships with our local secondary schools, we also know that the knowledge and skills we instil in French, give our children a springboard to success in the subject. Learning a foreign language is a great leveller for children, and one of the few subjects where everyone is learning together at a similar rate and pace. This gives it a different social dynamic in the classroom and fosters confidence and self-belief to attempt something new and exciting regardless of prior ability. Most importantly of all, French is also great fun!

As the subject lead, and teacher, I draw on my own background of French and German learning which I took at secondary level, receiving an A in French at GCSE level. I have thoroughly enjoyed revisiting my language learning through extensive professional development with the Local Authority and I also ensure I put it into practise through regular trips to Europe. My passion for learning about other cultures and traditions is something I ensure is transferred to learners. I want all of my learners to know that the world is an exciting place full of opportunities and that they are generation of global citizens for whom it has never been more open and accessible.

The choice of which languages to teach is secondary to the lifelong language learning skills that the pupils will be encouraged to develop. Skills that they will be able access in the future will help them to learn new languages or to improve their competence in an existing language. As we have been teaching languages in this way for eight years now, we have seen this ourselves as we've recently expanded our curriculum to cover at least one unit per term in either German, Spanish or Italian. Increased capability in the use of languages promotes initiative, confidence and independent learning and encourages diversity within society.

Mrs Alison McDonough

