

La Côte International School French Policy



Revised: Spring 2010

This policy is designed to set out the principles and practice of the teaching and acquisition of the French language at the La Côte International School.

Learning French at LCIS

LCIS is an English language school teaching the English National Curriculum, the school is located in a French speaking area of Switzerland and the staff, pupils and their families all live in French speaking communities.

LCIS supports the opportunity for all children to learn French and acknowledges that gaining a love of learning languages is an important life skill.

LCIS believes that the responsibility for the level of French acquired by a child rests with individual parents and their priorities. LCIS understands that not all parents consider this to be a priority whilst others give French acquisition a high level of importance.

LCIS recognises that the school has an important part to play by providing high quality French classes and by promoting the positive use of French at appropriate times in the school day.

Provision of French lessons and other activities in French should be provided without compromising the curriculum as a whole and taking care not to disadvantage or exclude any individual children.

It is important for children to have practical knowledge of French and to use it outside the classroom.

It is clear that some children have a lifestyle outside the school that is closely integrated with their local community. Others are exposed little if at all to the local community or language.

The school community is multi-cultural and multi-lingual, many children, parents and staff speak French and are used as a resource.

Principles of learning French

At La Côte International School we believe that all languages spoken in school should be celebrated and opportunities should be used to create links in learning both in school and with home. Multilingualism will always be

considered as an educationally enriching achievement.

The acquisition of French is best provided for in a natural learning context; in the mainstream classroom and in the wider school environment. Furthermore, focused lessons play a part in supporting other learning opportunities.

At LCIS we recognise that good language learning occurs through:

- repetition of key language;
- experimentation within different elements of French language;
- positive reinforcement within all situations and levels;
- exposure to a rich language environment;
- creating positive opportunities to communicate.

We consistently work hard at increasing the practical use of French in school and the number of opportunities for children to be exposed to and to use French within the school context. We will link the focus vocabulary and topics with real experiences within the local community and in school. For example, a visit to the local vineyard or a visit to school by a winemaker.

By promoting the value of French acquisition with our children we hope to give them useful language tools they can utilise within their local communities and during their time in Switzerland.

As a consequence of learning French at LCIS it is hoped that children will begin to develop a life long love of language learning, which will continue throughout their lives.

Practice of French Teaching and Learning

Provision of French teaching

French is timetabled and taught to all age groups from Foundation Stage to Year 6. Foundation children receive approximately 2 hours 30 minutes per week and Years 1 to 6 receive approximately 3 hours 20 minutes per week of French tuition. A specialist French teacher works with each class and teaches them in their own classroom.

French classes are only a part of a child's exposure to French language, the majority of this occurring outside the classroom and outside the school day.

Planning the French curriculum

Teaching and learning opportunities in French classes are based on the needs of the individuals in each class. Planning follows the progression of language learning throughout the primary years. It supports children in everyday conversational French in addition to learning through the themes and topics. Topics are chosen to support and reinforce other learning and to link learning.

French Curriculum

The French Curriculum has been designed internally and reflects the topics and themes of each year group as well as the abilities and existing fluencies of the children in each year.

The strands for the teaching and learning of French are:

- Oracy
- Literacy
- Intercultural Understanding
- Knowledge about the Language

This strand is integrated in the teaching and learning of French. Most opportunities to develop understanding and control of French will arise from learning activities.

- Language Learning Strategies

This strand will help children become more independent learners. The children are continuously encouraged to discuss their own learning strategies and expand their range by sharing with others. Strategies may include:

- Communicating; understanding and being understood;
- Practising the language;
- Memorising vocabulary, phrases and grammar points;
- Applying prior knowledge;
- Dictionary skills

French Activities

We aim to provide a positive teaching environment where the French language can be taught and reinforced in a focused way. All activities use a range of teaching and learning strategies and resources to offer a variety of learning experiences. Activities use a variety of techniques including visual cues, posters, cassettes, word cards and banks, French texts, 'real' objects, ICT games, external visits and invited French speakers to school.

At LCIS we always aim to provide models of the use of good French with displays and oral language promoted at all times.

French across the school

Foundation Stage

Children learn language through play and planned group activities in a natural way. We recognise, celebrate and promote children's home language and mother tongue. Parents are encouraged to continue to promote and use their home language with their children and reinforce vocabulary and concepts acquired at school through their mother tongue. Each child has a French folder with current themes and vocabulary. This is regularly brought home. Often young children are learning English as well and so French is taught in the context of the overall theme and specific language and vocabulary of the class. The French teacher is timetabled to work in the class every day within the normal Early Years environment.

Key Stage One and Two

Throughout Key Stage One and Two we recognise that children learn language through play and planned group activities in a natural way. We recognise, celebrate and promote children's home language and mother tongue. Parents are encouraged to continue to promote and use their home language with their children and reinforce vocabulary and concepts acquired at school through their mother tongue. Each child has a French folder with current themes and vocabulary. This is regularly brought home.

Children who are English Language Learners may not follow a full programme of French classes to allow extra English language support to be provided. The French teacher is timetabled to work with the Key Stage 1 and 2 classes every day.

In Key Stage 2, grammar points are introduced, for example conjugating verbs. For homework, children are regularly required to complete exercises or to review the grammar focus of the week/term.

Assessment

The French teacher informally assesses the children on a regular basis using observations, conversations and class work. There is no formal assessment in French at LCIS and no formal testing is undertaken.

The French teacher will inform parents of the progress of their child through the bi-annual reports and Parent-Teacher Conferences.

The role of the French Teacher

- Works with classes of children to teach and give them the language opportunities necessary to develop fluency and confidence in French.
- Liaises closely with class teachers and the Senior Management team to ensure that pupils receive quality teaching linked to other learning.
- Works alongside others in school to promote and celebrate French language opportunities and a positive French language-rich environment.

Appendix One: Action Plan to encourage a strong French language culture at LCIS

Action	Description	Success measure	Review of year 2008-09
1	Identify and develop appropriate activities in class that are linked to the local community and the social and linguistic functions of French	Teachers plans and lesson observations show evidence of linkages with appropriate activities	
2	Encourage English speaking staff to use French in school	Staff endeavour to use French in daily dialogue with French staff. Children are set a good example of practical French usage	
3	Native French speakers should wherever appropriate use French in the playground and dining room.		
4	Organise visits to local libraries as part of the French curriculum	Regular programme of visits scheduled and children regularly borrowing books in French	
5	Assistant support in French classes to be provided in French wherever practical	Assistants were possible in Early Years Classes support the French teacher by speaking French during French classes	
6	Each class to have at least one display area that promotes French	Displays evident	
7	Ensure the number of wall displays in communal areas feature some French words	Displays evident	
8	Ensure bi-lingual labelling of displays	Signs in place	
9	Promote a Top 10 / 20 phrases that every child should know and secure their use in school life	Top 10 / 20 established, displayed and in common use.	
10	Encourage children to learn songs and nursery rhymes in French classes and allow these to be performed in school	At least one assembly per month features a French song	
11	Provide French DVDs for wet play		
12	Provide an after school club choice that includes French	At least one after-school club per term offered in French	
13	Promote links with French speaking school children	One activity (individual class/whole school) per term planned with a partner school.	
14	Provide parents with information service to highlight out of school social opportunities	Newsletters include information on local events and clubs.	