

Studying French

France is our nearest European neighbour and historically one of our closest allies. The academic study of its beautiful language is excellent preparation for the future success of our pupils in the international market place.

We aim to teach pupils the language and skills needed to communicate successfully in French in a variety of situations. In Fourth and Fifth Year, pupils follow a course of study combining a grammatically structured approach with the development of practical language skills, as a preparation for further study or for work or travel in Francophone countries. Candidates are prepared for the AQA GCSE examination.

There are three main themes:

- Identity and Culture
- Local, National, International and Global Areas of Interest
- Current and Future Study and Employment

The examination is taken at the end of Fifth Year and there are four papers. There is no coursework.

- **Paper 1** – Listening (25%)
Candidates will hear recordings of native speakers and answer either with a non-verbal response or a short phrase / sentence in French or English.
- **Paper 2** – Reading (25%)
Candidates respond to questions relating to French passages of varying lengths. Questions are answered in English, French or non-verbally. There is also a short translation from French into English.
- **Paper 3** - Speaking (25%)
This lasts for 12 minutes and takes place in the April of Fifth Year. It is conducted, recorded and marked by the pupil's teacher. There are 3 sections: role-play, photo card and general conversation.
- **Paper 4** – Writing (25%)
There are two short essays (90 words and 150 words), as well as a short translation into French.

Throughout the course, the language used and tasks required of pupils are practical in nature, reflecting real situations which a young person might experience when in contact with native speakers. Pupils continuing with French may take part in the Fourth Year French exchange, during which they have the opportunity to stay with a French family in Paris, attend French school and visit the main sights.

Pupils are taught in smaller groups than previously and normally keep the same teacher for both years. The course book is AQA GCSE French (Higher), which provides a lively balanced approach to language learning, including pair and group work, plus varied listening, reading and written tasks. All pupils continue to have regular access to the language laboratories and in both years, pupils have the opportunity to work with the language assistant for one lesson per cycle.

