

25th November 2015

Dear Parents,

GCSE examinations and courses for French and Spanish are changing. This change will affect all pupils who are currently in Year 9 and below and who choose to do a GCSE in French or Spanish when they choose their options. Changes are also occurring for other languages.

The new GCSE is much more practical and expects pupils to have a wide vocabulary from memory. Pupils will be expected to be able to remember a lot of vocabulary and grammatical structures for their writing exam (this will replace controlled assessments) and speaking tests (this will be an unprepared conversation which replaces the current controlled assessments.) Pupils will also need to be able to translate sentences and paragraphs from English to French/Spanish and from French/Spanish in to English.

In order to prepare pupils for these changes we have made some changes to our KS3 (Year 7-9) curriculum. The content has remained very similar to previous years as we feel this gives pupils a good foundation for GCSE. The changes we have made are as follows;

- More teaching of phonics
- More teaching and practice of group talk and spontaneous talk
- Introduction of transcription
- Introduction of simple translation activities
- Increased use of poetry and literature from the country
- More frequent testing of vocabulary and grammar

Lessons are taught in blocks of five. In each block pupils will sit

- 1 vocabulary and grammar test
- 1 transcription (listening) and translation test.

If pupils need more time, teaching will be adapted accordingly. Pupils are given the vocabulary lists in advance and their homework task is to learn this vocabulary carefully and to try to use it in their written work and speaking activities. This is set in accordance with the homework timetable.

At the end of each module (there are 4 modules per year) pupils sit a comprehensive reading and listening test. They will also be tested on either speaking or writing.

The marks are recorded in their assessment books and these will go home to parents at the end of each module and tests. In the assessment books you will find;

- A summary of vocabulary and grammar test marks
- A summary of transcription and translation test marks
- An indication of pupil progress for all four skills (listening/speaking/reading and writing.)

Typically, pupils achieve higher marks in the receptive skills (listening and reading) and they develop their writing and speaking more slowly. We hope that you and your daughter will find this information useful.

We believe that it is important to encourage a growth mindset (a positive can-do attitude) and we would encourage you to speak to your daughter about her learning journey, and what she can do to keep on moving forwards and the link between home learning and progress in the classroom. We know that pupils who learn their vocabulary thoroughly do well in their end of module tests.

The feedback from pupils so far has been positive. We will be seeking pupil and parent opinion on the clarity of information, the frequency of assessment, the impact on learning and pupils' readiness for GCSE in 2016.

We thank you for your support.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact your daughter's French/Spanish teacher in the first instance.

Ms Emma Wright

Head of MFL

emma.wright@st-annes.uk.com