

# WESTCLIFF HIGH SCHOOL FOR BOYS



## Modern Foreign Languages for Year 7 Pupils

*Quelle langue?  
Welche Sprache?  
¿Qué idioma?*

# INTRODUCTION

WHSB encourages global awareness and effective communication skills and, in this respect, we provide all our Year 7 pupils with the opportunity to study two Foreign Languages. Currently, we offer French, German and Spanish. We would like your son to choose the one he would most like to learn; the second Language will be allocated based on availability. These two Languages will then be followed at least to the end of Year 9.

This Booklet provides some brief notes designed to help you make that choice. Please read the Booklet carefully and I would encourage you to consider the following points before selecting your son's chosen Language:

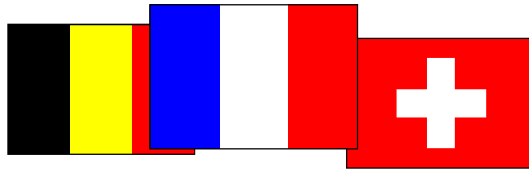
1. Pupils and parents should consider the long-term as the vast majority of our pupils go on to study at University and enter careers in which some facility for Foreign Languages may be an advantage.
2. The study of a Language is a subject in its own right. It offers pupils the opportunity to unlock and access the associated culture as well as allowing them to acquire Language knowledge and understanding.
3. Languages are categorised in 'families' as some are more closely related than others. For instance, French, Spanish, Catalan, Italian and Portuguese are closely related to each other and are known as '*Romance*' Languages. English, German, Dutch, Danish, Swedish, Norwegian and Icelandic form a separate group known as '*Germanic*'. Knowing one Language from a group subsequently makes learning another from the same group easier. Therefore, knowing a Language from each group potentially opens the door to learning a greater number of Languages in the future.

It is estimated that one million Britons live and work in Europe and a significant number in other parts of the world. The ability to offer more than one Language is becoming a significant factor in an increasingly globalised economy.

I am sure your son will enjoy the Languages he studies and I give him my best wishes for his future studies. Please do not hesitate to contact the School if you need any further information and advice.

Headmaster

# FRENCH



French is spoken in France, southern Belgium and western Switzerland and has traditionally been the first foreign language learned in the UK for a very long time. It is therefore the foreign language most known in the UK.

The reason for this is that, in the past, French was the language of high culture, society and diplomacy, and was, and is still, a language spoken outside Europe, mostly in Africa, Canada and the Caribbean. France is our closest geographical neighbour. The learning of French facilitates the subsequent learning of Italian, Spanish, Catalan and Portuguese. In addition:

- French is the third most published language in the world after English and German.
- French is the third most widely spoken language in the world after English and Spanish.
- French is the second most widely distributed language in the world.
- French has a very similar higher-level vocabulary to English, from which it came.
- French pronunciation and spelling can be difficult, especially at first.
- The cultural and literary hinterland to French is vast; the language is the home of authors and philosophers, poets and musicians.
- France is an important trading partner of the UK and is a sought-after language in business and commerce.



# GERMAN



German is spoken in Germany, Austria, most of Switzerland, Luxembourg and Liechtenstein. It has traditionally been a strong second foreign language in the UK, and is widely known in Eastern Europe. The numbers of pupils taking German in the UK nationally has declined in recent years. However, this makes knowing German even more valuable. It is arguably the most sought-after language in business and finance as Germany is without question the economic powerhouse of the European Union. Virtually every household is aware of German manufacturing. Learning German subsequently facilitates learning Dutch and the Scandinavian languages. In addition:

- German is the second most published language in the world after English: every 10<sup>th</sup> book in the world is published in German.
- German has the greatest number of native speakers of any language in Europe (around 100 million).
- Germany is the UK's biggest trading partner and is likely to remain so. Many British companies want their employees to have German for this reason.
- German everyday vocabulary is closely related to English, as is increasingly the higher-level vocabulary.
- German pronunciation and spelling are straightforward for English-speakers. German grammar has a reputation for being difficult but is no more so than French or Spanish.
- The cultural hinterland to German is exceptionally rich. The German language is represented well in virtually every field of human knowledge, from Engineering to Philosophy.



# SPANISH



Spanish is the second-most spoken language in the world, depending how the number is calculated. It is a pluricentric language and is spoken in Spain, South America (with the notable exception of Brazil), in the Caribbean and in Equatorial Guinea. Spanish has been taught successfully as a second foreign language for some time in UK Schools, but has enjoyed renewed interest in recent years owing to increased contacts with South and Central America, the popularity of Spain as a tourist destination and to Hispanic immigration in the USA.

The following points merit consideration:

- Variants of Spanish are spoken world-wide by around 300 million people, and in most of modern Spain.
- Spain is a significant trading partner of the UK in the EU.
- Spain and, to a lesser extent, Central and South America are popular tourist destinations.
- The learning of Spanish facilitates the subsequent learning of other *Romance* languages: Italian, French and particularly Portuguese and Catalan.
- Some aspects of Spanish grammar can be difficult, but it is relatively easy to pick up in the initial stages.
- Spanish pronunciation and spelling are not usually problematic for English-speakers. The higher level vocabulary resembles English to some degree.
- The cultural hinterland of Spanish is also extensive. There is an historic literary tradition reflecting the cultural exchanges that took place during the age of European exploration.

