



The Mandarin Department

The Mandarin department is part of a strong MFL team and considered to be a successful curriculum area in the school. Annually around 85-90% of students (the second highest amount in the county) are entered for a languages GCSE and our results contribute towards the school's EBacc figure, which is currently the best in the county.

Mandarin results over time (GCSE grades 9-4)

Year	Entries	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	U
2022	24	6	11	2	2	5	0	0	0	0	0
2023	20	1	4	4	4	7	0	0	0	0	0
2024	24	1	6	10	3	4	0	0	0	0	0
2025	25	1	9	10	1	4	0	0	0	0	0
2026	29	8	4	5	1	7	1	3	0	0	0

Languages and Courses

KS3 – Current year 7 students are allocated to one of two bands and study the language allocated to that band, which this year are French and Spanish. There are two data entries per year, and some form of assessment will take place before these take place. In KS3 progress is assessed by teachers who decide whether each student is above, on, or below target. Any assessments taken by our students mirror how they are assessed in the new specification GCSE exams, helping them to prepare for the demands of the updated examinations. Students are set by ability, though movement between the sets is common. All students are offered the chance of studying a second language from year 9 onwards.

In 2017 we were selected as part of the Chinese Government-funded 'Mandarin Excellence Programme' (MEP) and in the current years 7-10 between 25 and 30 students opted out of their European language and into Mandarin, which they will study for their five years at CWLC. Students opt into the programme through a process of identification, invitation and selection, which occurs during the transition process. Each year students sit hurdle tests on this programme and for the last five years and we consistently perform well above the national average for both hurdle tests and GCSE results. Our progress scores are always positive and are amongst the highest in the school.

KS4 – Between 85-90% of students continue with the study of their foreign language to the end of year 11, at which time they take their GCSE exams. We generally have 2 sets for Mandarin at GCSE to account for higher tier and foundation tier. We follow the AQA syllabus for GCSE.

KS5 – Our sixth form has now been open 11 years. Students wishing to study a language at Key Stage 5 are required to achieve at least a grade 7 at GCSE and are expected to complete preparatory work over the summer holiday. We have offered the Mandarin International Baccalaureate at Standard Level and A level Chinese in recent years to students at KS5. This year students are studying for A level.

Rooms and Equipment

There are two classrooms dedicated to mandarin. The department also has access to the school's well-equipped computer rooms on a booking basis. We have access to the Pearson Active Hub learning platform for GCSE, and Dynamic Learning for A level as well as a GoChinese for Mandarin.

Visits Abroad and Intensive Study Programmes

The students who are on the MEP in year 8 have a two-week intensive learning residential in China and our first cohort enjoyed their trip studying at Shanghai Foreign Language School in July 2019. In year 9 students attend an intensive learning residential at Nottingham University too. Our first cohort was due to attend for the first time in 2020, but this was cancelled due to the pandemic.

External Links

Members of the MFL department have in the past visited local primary schools and helped them in the delivery of the KS2 MFL Framework.

Students from the University of Worcester PGCE course, University of Birmingham and Haybridge Teaching School spend time with us on teaching practice and we have excellent links with them. We also have links with students from schools internationally and welcome visits from their students and teachers regularly throughout the year.

Ofsted

The school last had an Ofsted inspection in 2023 and continues to be rated as 'Good' overall.

The Future for Languages at Christopher Whitehead Language College & Sixth Form

We have maintained our Language College ethos since September 2005. This enables the department to further enhance its educational and cultural links both at home and abroad. Though no longer officially a language college since achieving Academy status, the school continues to promote the study of languages as a vital tool for lifelong learning and as a means of supporting our students in achieving the EBacc, (for which the school has the best results in the county).

We are looking forward to forging a wider range of links with schools across China. These developments already include the participation of other curriculum areas in our school in cross-curricular activities and projects.

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