

Mandarin Chinese

汉语 (hanyu) or 中文 (zhongwen)

Today's children grow up in an increasingly multi-cultural society and the ability to communicate in some of the most commonly spoken languages has become more relevant. At Waltham St Lawrence Primary School we believe it is important all children are given the opportunity to learn a foreign language. We are a forward thinking school and have chosen Mandarin as our Modern Foreign Language. We are very pleased to offer such an increasingly popular language to our pupils from 2014.

As part of the **National Curriculum**, learning a foreign language has been compulsory for Key Stage 2 children from Year 3. Here at WSL, pupils are given a head-start, with weekly structured Mandarin lessons offered to all children beginning in Reception.

The MFL curriculum sets out the following **Purpose of Study** for learning a foreign language:

- To provide an opening to other cultures
- To foster pupils' curiosity and deepen their understanding of the world
- To express their ideas and thoughts in another language and to understand and respond to its speakers
- To learn new ways of thinking and read great literature in the original language
- To provide foundation for learning future languages and equip pupils to study and work in other countries.

The National Curriculum for languages aims to ensure all pupils:

- Understand and respond to spoken and written language
- Speak with increasing confidence, fluency and spontaneity, and continually improve their pronunciation
- Write at varying lengths using a variety of grammatical structures
- Develop an appreciation of a range of writing in the language.
- Lay the foundations for further foreign language learning at KS3

Learning Mandarin, the most commonly spoken language in the world, can help individuals learn more about China's charming culture and ancient history. Moreover, developing this invaluable skill can help to increase employability in the future. The earlier a child starts learning languages, the better, and that particularly applies to Mandarin.

We have been recruiting our Chinese Language Teacher / Assistant through British Council. We have been building our capacity over the last few years and are proud to become self-sufficient and work in close partnership with Swire Chinese Language Foundation and other local schools.



At WSL Mandarin is taught following our self-designed bespoke Mandarin Curriculum, as well as other appropriate textbooks and online resources. This helps provide a variety of learning materials based on the age and level of attainment for each child.

We ensure the process of learning Mandarin is enjoyable - a typical lesson is very interactive, packed with fun activities such as singing songs, playing language games, reading simple Chinese books and reciting and performing poems. In every lesson, children practise their speaking and listening skills. They practise the pronunciation out loud, this is largely done using games, songs and rhymes with a regular phonics warm-up to establish correct pronunciation. As well as participating in whole-class oral work, the children get lots of opportunity to practise with their peers in pairs or small groups. Alongside these skills, all classes will explore the fundamentals of the written language and will

gradually build their ability in reading and writing Chinese characters as they progress through the curriculum.

Although there are many stereotypes of Chinese being very difficult to learn, our pupils enjoy the challenge of writing characters and mastering pronunciation with the support of a Mandarin Specialist Teacher. Their Mandarin lessons not only equip them with the knowledge and understanding to communicate in the most widely spoken world language, but also increase their intercultural understanding by seeing things from another's perspective, giving them insight into the people and traditions of other cultures. We believe that this is essential when developing global citizens.

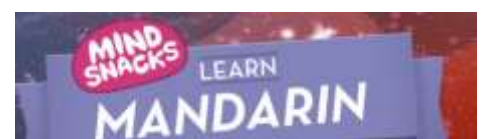
Exploring aspects of Chinese culture is an integral part of the learning and where possible, references to Chinese culture, history and geography are incorporated into the language exercises. It is interesting and fun for the children to find out about China and the Chinese way of life and compare it with their own. We are keen for the children to bring in their own cultural experiences and knowledge of other languages to the Mandarin lesson. We ensure children learn Mandarin in context and to find pleasure in the process. For example:

- In Reception, children have a short Mandarin lesson based around songs and rhymes.
- In Key Stage 1, children's learning is based around songs, rhymes and games. Through this, children start to hear the different sounds that occur in Mandarin and feel confident using key words and phrases. They begin to learn basic components of Chinese characters and start their journey towards reading and writing in another language.
- In Key Stage 2, pupils are encouraged to practise writing characters regularly and will be given the opportunity to practise their speaking and listening. Pupils who begin Mandarin in Year 1, should be able to understand around 100 characters by Year 5 - in line with the internationally recognised Youth Chinese Test.
- Children who have achieved the required standard in Mandarin in Year 5 will be entered for the internationally used Youth Chinese Test (YCT).

Above all, the aim of our Mandarin and Chinese Culture Curriculum is to:

- 'Lay the foundations' and inspire children and equip them with the skills and confidence to learn foreign languages going into Key Stage Three (KS3) and beyond
- Deepen intercultural awareness through exploring another culture and way of life and give WSL Primary children the opportunity to understand core British values within a global context.

Useful online Learning Resources:



<http://www.china.mrdonn.org/>

Here are some examples of children's work. They learned to write Chinese Characters, Calligraphy and paint in Chinese style using a Chinese brush and ink.

Chinese Painting – Bamboo & Cherry Blossoms & Pandas











Learning TaiJi / Tai Chi

